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ABSTRACT

Based upon case studies, surveys conducted in 18 participating school districts in fall 1987 and spring 1988, meeting observations, discussions with project staff, and an audit trail, this report evaluates the first year of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project (WRRIP), a school improvement project aimed at helping small, rural schools improve reading instruction by teaching reading as thinking (also termed "strategic reading"). The means used to achieve this improvement is through staff development utilizing distance learning: specifically, a leadership team composed of a school principal, the reading specialist, and the media specialist work together to support targeted teachers while information is delivered to the team and the teachers through an assortment of telecommunications strategies. The report is in five major sections. The first section is an evaluation summary which discusses 10 general findings (sorted into 4 categories: Reading Instruction, Staff Development, Distance Learning, and Project Organization and Delivery), gives 8 findings from the fall and spring surveys, describes generally the evaluation methodology used, and provides a description of the project at the end of year 1. The second section describes five case studies, while the third section gives detailed results of the two surveys. The mid-year formative evaluation report is contained in the fourth section, and the fifth section gives the response to the mid-year report by the Wisconsin project staff. (SR)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project

1987-1988

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EVALUATION SUMMARY

Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project

The year-long evaluation of 18 school districts involved in the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project (WRRIP) involved several kinds of studies. The two most formal studies were a pre and post survey of project participants and case studies at 5 of the 18 school districts. In addition, evaluators attended and observed a number of project meetings, and worked with project staff to build a document file--or audit trail--that could help keep track of all the project did over the year.

Evaluators had a good deal of contact with school districts and with project staff. In January, the evaluation team briefed WRRIP staff on what they had found through the survey and the first round of site visits. This report, and the WRRIP staff response to it, are part of the full evaluation report. Formative feedback, or exchange of information from evaluators to project staff, was an important part of the evaluation process. Some changes in the project were made based upon this exchange along the way.

This evaluation summary begins with ten general findings sorted into four categories: Reading Instruction, Staff Development; Distance Learning; and Project Organization and Delivery. This is followed by eight findings from the Fall and Spring surveys. The next section in the summary describes generally the evaluation methodology used. And, the final section provides a description of the project at the end of year one. The full evaluation report includes copies of the five case studies, detailed results of the Fall and Spring surveys, the mid-year formative evaluation report, and the response to the mid-year report by the Wisconsin project staff.

General Overview. In September, 5 sites were selected for maximum variation--that is, school districts that represented the possible variations of resources. We had sites with no reading specialist, sites pretty sophisticated about telecommunications, sites close to a larger city and others not so close, and so forth. Each case study evaluator, experienced in collecting descriptive information, was given a general list of "probes" or things to look at. Each was asked to visit their site three times. Each was asked to let each member of the district leadership team and the target teachers review his or her case study before submitting it. Every case study evaluator handled their site slightly differently. Finally, each submitted a 30 page report which is part of the full evaluation.

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project (WRRIP) is a school improvement project aimed at helping schools do better at reading. The project was developed especially for small, rural districts. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) funding this project has a major purpose of learning as much as possible about school improvement in reading. Their objective is to share this information with other states in the region, and other regions.

WRRIP focuses on reading instruction. Teaching reading as thinking, or strategic reading, is defined by a set of materials produced by the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and supplemented by other commercial and academic resources. The means for achieving improved reading instruction in WRRIP is through staff development. Specifically, a leadership team composed of a school principal, the reading specialist, and the media specialist work together to support targeted teachers in reading instruction. The reading specialist provides role modeling and mentoring. Information is delivered to the team and target teachers through an assortment of telecommunication strategies that allow for distance learning. These strategies include televised videotapes for teacher training, videotapes for in-class student use, radio broadcasted training programs, teleconferencing on reading issues, and electronic bulletin board exchanges. These distance learning strategies were supported in 87-88 with a number of face-to-face project meetings, site visits by project staff, and written materials.

WRRIP was defined a little differently at each site--that is, it was tailored for and by district personnel to fit their capabilities and meet their needs. In its first year, then, there was not a uniform common construction of WRRIP. While this is not unusual for a project in its first year, evaluators are challenged by evaluating a project that may be different across sites or not yet fully defined even within a single site. The project came a long way in defining itself during 87-88. This year's external evaluation helps describe the first year of WRRIP along with assessing it according to its intents.

Major findings based upon case studies, survey information, observations of meetings, discussions with project staff, and audit trail follow.

Reading Instruction

WRRIP helped target teachers improve their effectiveness in reading instruction. Case studies, survey responses, and project staff observations documented changes in the way project teachers and reading specialists teach reading. Not only did teachers demonstrate and talk about changes in their reading instruction, for the most part they believed these changes to be improvements. That is, they felt that teaching reading as thinking, or strategic reading, helped their students become better readers.

Teachers and leadership teams acquired new reading instruction knowledge from distance learning strategies supported by collegial interaction. There was evidence that strategic reading was being used in classrooms, in teacher planning, in learning centers, and in the language used to describe reading instruction. In most sites, this information came to teachers from taped training programs, written materials, teleconferences, and radio programs. Once the information was in the district, many teachers worked together or with their reading specialist to apply the strategic lessons in their classrooms.

Teachers and reading specialists generally believed students benefited from the strategic reading approach. At most sites, leadership teams and target teachers welcomed the added resources to be used for reading instruction, believed that these resources had changed reading instruction for the better, and further believed that students were helped by the strategic reading approach. The amount of perceived change or improvement varied. Some sites saw the new approach to reading as similar to their present approach, others saw it as markedly different. Some sites involved whole teaching staffs, others only two teachers. Some sites anticipated comprehensive and enduring changes in their reading program based on strategic reading, others had more modest goals. However, in all sites reaction to strategic reading generally was positive--WRRIP was a successful school improvement project.

Staff development

The "leadership team" used shows promise. Of all the project elements that varied across sites, the use of the leadership team and its role in supporting target teachers probably varied the most. Principals typically helped organize, handling paperwork and getting substitutes for example. Reading specialists in some districts observed and modeled, in other districts they did not. This appeared to depend upon their own teaching responsibilities. Media specialists played key roles in some districts passing information to teachers and specialists, organizing books and materials for their use, and hosting meetings in their centers. In other districts they merely cataloged materials.

Survey responses show positive regard for the team concept and case studies document the development of more specific roles and responsibilities over the duration of a year in most districts. This team of three puts many important school resources and networks together for the purpose of helping teachers. These teams need further definition and practice this year before their long-term effectiveness can be evaluated.

WRRIP increased dramatically the amount of time spent on staff development in reading instruction for project classroom teachers. Based on the amount of reading instruction training teachers reported getting in the past, this project provided much needed and wanted inservicing for teachers. Further, use of in-district teams and distance learning strategies increased the amount of training time for teachers. In comparison to the more typical one-shot workshop or conference, or even a semester-long college course, teachers and reading specialists appeared to spend more time learning (contact time) and applying new information within the WRRIP model.

WRRIP could benefit from clearer role definitions for leadership team members and more direction regarding their role in staff development. To institutionalize this "leadership team," and to study its transportability to other rural school districts in the region, it would be helpful to see further development of the "team" model. That is, a better understanding of the role of the media specialist and the principal, and their relationship to the reading specialist would be helpful. This defining process undoubtedly will evolve at the district level, but can be aided and even guided by project staff along the way.

Distance learning

The use of technology-supported staff development for rural classroom teachers seems both feasible and promising. The most controversial aspect of WRRIP in 87-88 was the debate over whether technology aided or burdened the project. This was unfortunate and due to problems unrelated to the project--for example, late funding, competitive bidding procedures, and late deliveries. Nonetheless, it frustrated district staff and increased their responsibilities. Likewise, it frustrated and compounded the responsibilities for project staff. Given these mishaps, once the technologies were in place their use seemed promising. Teleconferencing, for example, was used for project calls and for other district purposes. VCRs were being used in greater numbers. District staff were at least trying to master the electronic bulletin board. And tapes of radio programs were being exchanged. While the technology created problems for the project this year, on the other hand the information used by teachers successfully in their classrooms essentially came via distance learning strategies.

Teachers and leadership team members need training as adult learners to optimize their use of distance learning strategies. Learning via television, radio, electronic bulletin board and telephone is new to many teachers. Some districts and their staff were more familiar with the technology used by the project, others were uncomfortable with the technology, frustrated in using it, and uneasy when interacting with it. To take advantage of teleconferencing and electronic bulletin boards, for example, users must feel comfortable enough to ignore the technology and concentrate on substantive issues. In many districts this had not yet happened. Before distance learning strategies can be evaluated for their effectiveness in teaching, users should be comfortable with them.

Project organization and delivery

Overall WRRIP staff were successful in meeting project objectives in their first year. 18 school districts received several kinds of technology, got on line for training information, received site visits, received materials, and documented changes in their reading programs. While success was uneven, a great deal was accomplished in each district in the first project year. The strategic reading "message" got out, the technology was put in place, the leadership team was formed, the reading specialist was informed, and at least a few teachers in each school implemented to some extent strategic reading principles. The 88-89 year begins with a solid foundation and lessons learned from the previous year.

Project objectives and expectations need to be reasonable and shared at the district and project level. If anything, this is a project staff that attempts to go beyond its stated mission and objectives to meet client needs. Generally, district staff, particularly reading specialists, evaluated highly the effectiveness of the project staff on surveys. In discussions, they were critical at times of project organization. Ironically, this criticism stems from the project staff's desire to meet more needs and objectives than were initially planned. This sometimes led to what was seen as an ad hoc approach. A shared and reasonable set of project plans can help district teams anticipate their investment, prevent project staff from overinvesting, and keep project delivery reasonable. Should the project become too "expensive" in terms of time, money, or effort, it is less likely to be replicated or maintained.

Survey Results

A survey was conducted in the 18 WRRIP participating school districts in Fall of 1987 and Spring of 1988 as part of the evaluation. Across the districts 48 teachers in the reading project (target teachers) were surveyed in the Fall, 42 in the Spring. 37 teachers not in the project (comparison teachers) were surveyed Fall, 40 Spring. 19 reading specialists and 17 administrators were surveyed Fall and Spring.

A summary of some information the survey provided follows.

The WRRIP teacher. A profile of teachers in the 18 districts--both comparison and target teachers involved in the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project--indicates they tend to have about 15 years experience, 9 at their present grade level, 11 in their present school. Most have a BS or BA (90%), graduated from a UW college (40% from UW Eau Claire), and obtained their degrees between 10 and 15 years ago. Target teachers most likely teach grade 3 or 4, comparison teachers are spread across grades 3 through 6.

Staff development in reading. About half of the target and comparison teachers haven't had any reading-related staff development for at least 2 years. But some have had coursework (13%), attended conferences (13%), or had inservices (9%). A majority (about 90%) do not belong to the Wisconsin Reading Association. Most (about 60%) would like to spend more time on staff development in reading. The preferred kind of staff development is working with colleagues, particularly observing other classrooms, and attending workshops.

Attitude about reading instruction. Teachers surveyed agreed that reading in their districts was a high priority. They reported spending about 3 hours (target teachers) to 4 hours (comparison teachers) a day on reading. A majority report that they like to teach reading. The hardest problems they encounter when teaching reading are lack of time, knowledge about specific instructional processes, and evaluating student cognitive problems. On the whole, both sets of teachers report that their schools are doing a pretty good job in the area of reading.

Actual reading instruction. Teachers report about three quarters of their instruction is based on the basal reader (78% Fall and 70% Spring). They spend 4 and a half to 5 hours a week preparing for reading lessons, and report spending between a half hour and an hour a week with their reading specialist and their teacher aides. About half the reading instruction time their students spend as a class, one third of the time in smaller groups (usually 2) formed by ability.

Perception of student reading. Teachers report that a majority of their students enjoy reading. They evaluate reading in their schools as about 40% good readers, 40% average readers, and 20% poor readers. They consider the most serious reading problems of poor readers to be comprehension and word problems. They perceive that poor readers have problems at the passage level.

Reactions to Strategic Reading Principles. Target and comparison teachers were in agreement, in theory, with principles of strategic reading outlined in the survey. This was true in Fall and Spring. In Spring some differences between the two groups occurred as the target teachers reported spending more instructional time on strategic reading activities such as semantic mapping making predictions, and talking about the reading process. Also by Spring, target teachers were in closer alignment with responses of reading specialists than were comparison teachers.

Reaction to WRRIP. Both target and comparison teachers had positive remarks to make about the involvement of their school in the reading improvement project. In particular, target teachers evaluated highly the responsiveness of the Wisconsin Project staff, their helpfulness and the quality of their support. Teachers rated leadership team effectiveness as good, noting that teams were committed to the project and supportive of teachers.

Survey responses indicate that the average number of videotapes seen by project teachers was 7, and most had been involved in 3 to 4 conference calls. Teachers, on the average, had listened to 4 to 5 radio programs, and few had been on the electronic bulletin board. Teachers rank ordered project resources as follows: Storylords, leadership team, videotapes, written materials, curriculum guide, teleconferencing, and radio broadcasts. Almost every teacher had used Storylords and rated the series as effective.

Reading Specialist's perspective. Most reading specialists (over 80%) have their master's degree. They average 9 years experience as reading supervisors, 19 years as teachers, and 11 years in their present school. Reading specialists see about 20% of students in their schools as good readers, 50% as average, and 30% as poor. While some specialists spend up to 25 hours a week supervising reading, almost half report no time supervising as their time is spent teaching. This group tends to have more reading-related professional activities and recent coursework. Almost 70% belong to the Wisconsin Reading Association.

Reading specialists tend to believe schools could do more in the area of reading curriculum, assessment, and instruction. They are more concerned about the effectiveness of the reading program for poor and good readers than for average readers. Like teachers, reading specialists consider reading to be a high priority in their district supported by principals and teachers. They, too, think more staff development time should be devoted to reading.

Reading specialists saw an average of 9 videotapes, were involved in an average of 7 teleconferences, and listened to about 6 radio programs. About a third of the specialists had been on the bulletin board an average of 6 times. Specialists rated Wisconsin project staff as very helpful with good or excellent quality professional support. Reading specialists were rated, themselves, as highly effective team members by teachers and administrators. They rank ordered project resources as follows: Storylords, curriculum guide, videotapes, written materials and leadership team, radio broadcasts, and teleconferencing.

On the whole, reading specialists more closely aligned themselves with strategic reading principles and processes, diagnosed reading problems more specifically (e.g. metacognition and affect), and often expressed higher expectations for their district in the area of reading.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project was guided by an Evaluation Design Advisory Team. This team consisted of Robert Stake, University of Illinois, Egon Guba, Indiana University, and Wayne Welch, University of Minnesota. Together, the Design Team members have considerable experience and expertise in evaluating education in the north central region and beyond. The Design Team met with the project evaluation team twice--first in September to review and refine the evaluation design, and, second, in May to review evaluation results, guide reporting, and evaluate the evaluation.

Survey. Work began during the summer of 1988 to develop a survey that would collect descriptive information about district personnel involved in the project. Additionally, the survey was to describe reading instruction practices and assumptions, and background staff development experiences of respondents. Several drafts of the survey were constructed by a team including Wisconsin Project staff, NCREL staff, and evaluation team members. Once the content of the survey was negotiated and finalized, it was sent to approximately 40 target teachers, 40 comparison teachers, 20 building principals and 20 reading specialists. This same group was surveyed the following Spring. Results are summarized in another part of this report.

Partner evaluators. Survey packets were sent to partner evaluators in each school district. These partners were volunteers from the leadership team who agreed to help in distributing and collecting surveys, and coordinating the site visits in the case of the five case study school districts. Both Fall and Spring there was a 100% survey response rate. Case study evaluators reacted positively to the help given them at their sites in scheduling visits and interviews and touring facilities.

Project monitoring. Evaluation team members attended most of the face-to-face meetings held for WRRIP district team members. Additionally, Wisconsin Project Staff provided copies of all materials to principal investigator, Jeri Nowakowski. These materials included but were not limited to: transcripts of teleconferences, tapes of radio broadcasts, reading instruction materials, memos and letters to district staff, schedules of meetings to be held and subsequent write-ups of results, and so forth. This "audit trail" permits internal and external evaluation of much of what transpired during the first project year. Conclusions drawn in the executive summary have supporting evidence in the communications and documentation in this extensive audit trail.

Case studies. Five districts were the target for more extensive study. These districts were visited by a case study evaluator three times during the project year. Case study evaluators included Tom Faase, St. Norberts College, Thomas Schwandt, Northern Illinois University, Gordon Hoke, University of Illinois, Dennis Gooler, Northern Illinois University and Jeri Nowakowski, Northern Illinois University. Each of the case study evaluators received a set of probes or questions to address at their respective site. These questions helped evaluators focus on common project variables or dimensions, including: aspects relating to the effectiveness of the leadership team and each of its respective members; dimensions of the reading instruction intervention--strategic reading--and its effective implementation by target teachers and reading specialists; and, the delivery of staff development using distance learning technology including T.V., radio, teleconferencing, electronic bulletin board, and print materials. However, the general objective was to observe and document how successfully the project was being implemented at each site, and to note what problems, if any, were occurring that Wisconsin staff might be able to rectify. That is, there was a strong emphasis on providing actionable feedback for project improvement.

Each case study evaluator collected information slightly differently, and collected slightly different kinds of information. For example, Nowakowski provided transcripts of actual classroom lessons in strategic reading; Hoke permitted district personnel to portray their own project by using interview comments from them and their students to characterize what was happening; Schwandt focused on the dynamics of the communities and their impact on rural education--and this project; Gooler was asked to focus specifically on technology and its use in his district; Faase characterized the general style and philosophy of teachers involved in project implementation. All case study evaluators depended upon observation and interview. Some collected portfolio information or artifacts from their settings, others requested and received videotapes of actual teaching. All case study evaluators tried to be attentive to the delivery of this project in a rural setting--each tried to capture what in such a setting effected the opportunities or obstacles to this kind of project. These variations on information collection were seen as desirable and successful, just as we came to see the variations on project implementation across sites.

Mid-year feedback. In January, case study evaluators met with NCREL and WRRIP staff to provide feedback on information gathered to date. This information included Fall survey results, the first round of case study site visits, and observations of project meetings. Midterm reports are included in the full technical report. Response to the midyear report by WRRIP staff is also included as it provides explanation of events from Wisconsin staff perspective as well as action steps taken based upon feedback.

Before case studies were submitted, each case study evaluator provided a copy of his or her case study to the district leadership team and the target teachers. District personnel were asked to provide feedback to the evaluator at several different levels. First, did they have editing refinements to help provide more accurate information. Second, was information left out that they would add. And, third, and most important, did they feel the case study was adequate and accurate in telling their story. In the third case, district staff were invited to provide feedback, recommendations, or even a letter expressing another or an opposing viewpoint. In each site, case studies were successfully reviewed, refined, and generally endorsed by project staff as accurate portrayals.

Metaevaluation. The final step in evaluation was submission of all reports to the Evaluation Design Advisory Team, NCREL staff, and WRRIP staff. In May, 1988, a two-day meeting was held to review the results of the evaluation, to address specific questions from WRRIP staff, and to consider the most appropriate way to package and deliver the final report for NCREL use and for use by the 18 districts in Wisconsin. At the same time, information produced for 1988-1989 was assessed to determine the most cost effective evaluation design for the subsequent project year. Based on this meeting, the decision was made to continue surveying, to continue four of five case studies, and to collect, if possible, specific student assessment data in 1988-89.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Year One

Describing the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project probably reveals as much about the perspective of the person describing as it does about the project. That is to say, many key stakeholders see the project slightly differently. Most would agree on the features that are described below, but the balance of those features is perceived differently. For example, some would emphasize the distance learning component of the project, others the reading instruction strategies, still others the staff development dimensions. Among those who see it as all three, there still might not be total agreement regarding project purpose and methodological roots. WRRIP can be interpreted along a number of different lines or themes in part because it is a multifaceted project whose creators understand its complexity. And in part, its different storylines are the result of an evolutionary process that has not yet seen the project strands coalesce into an easily labeled whole.

The overall evaluation found many promising dimensions in WRRIP. Other states may want to follow their progress and consider the project's relevance to their rural settings. For that reason, this description of the project attempts to portray, for those outside the immediate project team, what the project looked like this first year. The project is described here using evaluation information and considering alternative perspectives. While ultimately it provides an evaluator's perspective of the project, it attempts to be sensitive to multiple perspectives.

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project is the product of a collaborative effort across a number of organizations including the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, and 18 rural Wisconsin school districts with K-12 enrollments of 900 or less. The project is co-directed by staff from Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks and the Department of Public Instruction. It has been influenced as well in design and implementation by staff from its funding source, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. In implementation, it has been tailored by and for the 18 school districts involved in the project. It has been influenced as well by evaluation information provided by yet another organization, the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Policy Studies, Northern Illinois University.

Staff development. WRRIP is a staff development project which targets, in this case, elementary school teachers, school administrators and reading specialists. (It could be applied to teachers at other grade levels.) There is much evidence that rural educational settings often do not have access to resources for ongoing staff development. This project is attempting to meet that need in the rural setting by using several unique strategies. The staff development approach is described by Wisconsin Project staff as evolutionary and natural. By this they mean that new information and strategies are introduced, and the group of teachers understanding and using them grows incrementally. There is no assumption that the training will create a new way of teaching reading, overhauling over-night more traditional methods. (See Stake, 1987).

NCREL staff refer to the staff development approach as a trainer-of-trainers model to underline its planned sequencing of dissemination. In this case, the reading specialist models and works with several target teachers, who then work with each other and subsequently new teachers, and so forth. Through this process, the number of "experts" within each district grows. Evaluation information from surveys indicates that in the 18 project districts, time spent in staff development increased dramatically this year for those involved in the project.

Leadership team. One of the most interesting aspects of the staff development delivery is the construction of a leadership team within a project school. Influenced by a four-year staff development study by Ogle (1986), Wisconsin Project staff attempted to build in the involvement, support, and training of some key building personnel. The leadership team consists of the building administrator (usually the principal, but not always), the reading specialist and the media specialist (if they have one, and in most cases in these districts they did).

WRRIP provided some training for all three members of this team and, most importantly, helped members see themselves, sometimes for the first time, as a team. This brought about changes in organizational roles that in turn brought opportunities and challenges. The principal played a key role in facilitating the project, providing released time, passing information to key players, promoting the adoption of the reading instructional material, and in some cases observing and providing feedback to teachers on reading instruction. (This last role was promoted by Wisconsin staff, but many principals the first year did not feel comfortable at it.)

The media specialist became the conduit for information flow. The library or media center often housed project information (videotapes, audiotapes, the bulletin board, materials, and so forth). The media specialist came to know the materials, monitored their use, communicated with Project staff, materials, and so forth). The media specialist came to know the materials, monitored their use, communicated with Project staff, and, in some cases, came to understand the reading instructional materials well enough to supply guidance to teachers for reading selections and class materials. This was seen as important because the media specialists in rural schools often have influence if not control over the resources--books, software and hardware--that become a part of the school library. Some media specialists went to the Wisconsin Reading Conference to hear more about this instructional approach and its supporting materials.

The reading specialists had their role formalized in this project. In many schools, they traditionally provide backbone support to the reading program--teaching Chapter 1 students, supporting teachers with individual students, selecting and interpreting reading achievement tests, influencing choice of reading series. The project made their role more visible in many districts, provided for released time to collect and organize staff development materials, and created a setting in which their expertise was used. At each project school, the reading specialist became the resident expert, interpreting for others the Wisconsin Project materials and objectives. The challenge was that many specialists spend all day in the classroom teaching. Some could not free themselves up to take on Project responsibilities. And others, at least this first year, felt most comfortable in the classroom. In all cases, however, the support of the reading specialist was a fundamental part of project implementation.

These teams functioned differently at project sites. In part the differences were due to personalities, historical roles, and areas of expertise. As the year went by, the Wisconsin project staff attempted to help clarify what team members should be responsible for, and how they might work together. WRRIP introduced the notion to these school personnel that they were a "team."

Distance learning. For many states and rural settings, one of the most intriguing aspects of WRRIP is its connection with the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks and delivery of information through this and other telecommunications systems. It is undoubtedly the most challenging part of the project and potentially of great importance for rural education settings. It is impossible to separate the effectiveness of the telecommunications systems that brought information to rural schools from the information the system brought. Reading instruction, particularly the reading as thinking approach described in the Wisconsin project materials, was interesting, valued, and accepted by most district personnel. They listened, watched, and talked by phone about the project not because the telecommunications were there, but because there was good reason to use them.

Installing distance learning mechanisms is surprisingly complex. The problems begin with statewide resources (like the telephone system or narrowband radio accessibility) and run to school buildings where wiring glitches prevent reception. Troubleshooting becomes an art form, and having an experienced team (staff from the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Network (WPRTN) as well as Department of Public Instruction and CESA staff responsible for statewide technology efforts) is terribly important. The effort is statewide, as much of the educational telecommunications system development is limited or defined by state resources, policies, and politics. Guiding the effort in Wisconsin is the underlying belief of a critical mass that television, radio, computers, and telephones can and should be used to assist public education.

The five technologies used included: broadcast public television (in Wisconsin there is a state public television and radio network), narrowcast FM public radio (called SCA instructional radio, a service of Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Network), narrowcast television (called ITFS and also a Network service), telephone conferencing (called WisLINE, a service of the University of Wisconsin Extension, Instructional Telecommunications Systems), and electronic mail and forums (called LEARNING LINK, another service of Wisconsin Public Broadcasting). More information about these technologies and how they were installed at project schools is available through Dr. Margaret Wilsman, Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Network. (See also, Wilsman, 1988).

At the school level, these technologies usually translated into the following activities. Media specialists taped the narrowcast television programs for use by teachers later. The videotapes became part of a library used for faculty inservices or individual teacher viewing. Similarly, the narrowcast radio broadcasts were taped by media specialists and audiotapes became part of the school library. Teachers listened to them as a group or checked them out to play in cars or at home. School project members gathered around a speaker phone for conference calls that involved as many as seven other districts and Wisconsin project staff. Teachers checked out Storylord videotapes and used them with students on VCRs in their classrooms. Students used Storylord discs on computers in the classroom or media center. The media specialist got on the Apple, used the modem, and accessed electronic messages every few days. Wisconsin staff began sending important information via the bulletin board, slowly districts began communicating back to staff, and sometimes with each other, using the bulletin board.

Five of the 18 project school districts received microwave dishes used to receive ITFS (instruction Television Fix Services) programming. Beamed off of a public television broadcast tower located on Rib Mountain in Wausau, programming is sent from either the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Telecommunications Center or the North Central Technical College Communications Center (NCTC). In the Winter, narrowcast television sent from NCTC was used to distribute a PBS/NCREL satellite television conference called "Teaching Reading as Thinking." Project participants from 13 school districts traveled to one of the five sites to participate in this national satellite conference introduced and summarized by project-produced programming. In Spring two more ITFS programs were produced for district leadership teams. Video tapes preproduced at the public television station in Milwaukee were used, and four 20 minute programs were produced by the project with Donna Ogle, National College in Evanston, Illinois and the leadership team from Zion School District. The ITFS program focused on the leadership team--especially the principal's role in bringing about change in the reading program. During the Spring television programs participation was primarily people at the five sites with microwave dishes.

What did not happen is traditional lecturing, classroom style, from expert to students. This was not a college coursework format. It was extended staff development, information was passed via telecommunications, and implementation was defined and monitored at the school level by school staff.

Reading instruction. The heart of WRRIP is the substantive message it brought to target teachers and leadership team members in the 18 project districts. Described using different terms, it is a method of teaching reading to students. In the project schools, it was most often referred to as "strategic reading," with corresponding instructional activities called "strategies." This instructional process is also referred to as "reading as thinking."

Research-based reading instructional materials made up the staff development package. They included a DPI curriculum guide, a set of 14 video lessons entitled "Teaching Reading Comprehension," and a set of videotapes and discs entitled "Storylords." While this was the core of the information provided to districts, many supplementary materials were provided. For example each district received a commercial reading series kit, a copy of A Nation of Readers, and literally hundreds of pages of research reports, lesson aides, example applications, and discourses on problems involved in learning and using the new instructional strategies. The latter were prepared by the project staff.

Evaluation indicates some noticeable patterns of change for target teachers using the new strategic reading approach. For example, there was more student talk, particularly more talk about what students were thinking about stories, what they knew about the content of a passage before they began reading, what they thought would happen in a story they read, how they interpreted a book, how they "understood" what they read, how they came to understand an unfamiliar word, and so forth. A series of key terms, such as "prior knowledge" helped them talk about these new exercises in reading.

This new approach to reading instruction is beginning to take hold in other statewide efforts, for example, in Michigan and Illinois. State testing of reading also is beginning to reflect a strategic approach to reading. This is to say, at least in the NCREL region the reading materials used in this project are probably transportable, with reasonable modifications, to other states. Additionally, they are applicable to secondary as well as elementary education.

District investment. This is not an external project with staff who come in and deliver inservices, thereafter leaving. To be successful, districts had a considerable investment in the project which was, in the truest sense of the term, collaborative.

Districts received from the Wisconsin project $1600 to provide for released time for participating staff. They also received varying amounts of equipment to ready their district for receiving telecommunications systems. In turn, they provided a leadership team which worked during the year, a partner evaluator, and target teachers. How the project was operationalized and sustained throughout the year, while supported by Wisconsin staff, was greatly determined by their own initiative.

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CASE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN FALL CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Delivered to Fall Creek leadership team and target teachers
April 15, 1988

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Evaluator

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III. Reactions of Fall Creek Staff to Case Study

Fall Creek town and district. Fall Creek is a small, rural town with a population of about 1100 located 9 miles west of Eau Claire (population 50,000) in northwestern Wisconsin. Downtown Fall Creek has no traffic lights, a few businesses--including a bank, several taverns, a jewelry store, a couple of service stations, and a furniture store which is going out of business. As you enter town, a fairly modern nursing home is on the right and a motel converted to a permanent boarding home on the left. A sign on the right, adjacent to a large gravel pile, announces the construction of a new nursing home and chapel.

Fall Creek Elementary School is several blocks south of main street, adjacent to the modern high school and a block or two away from the aging middle school. The elementary and high schools share the same parking lot. To the north of Fall Creek Elementary are neighborhood homes, about 10 square blocks of which constitute the body of the town. From the south, one looks over the playground to farm land and wooded hills.

Fall Creek has a K-12 school district with an enrollment of about 850 students. Around 600 of these students are bussed from the surrounding 100 square mile area. The district boundaries generally form a 10 mile square, with the west boundary buttressing Eau Claire. The per pupil expenditure is a little below the state average, and about 65% of per pupil expenditure is covered by the state. Approximately 70 of the 350 elementary school students are enrolled in Chapter I, and most elementary students are in the hot lunch program.

Because of its proximity to Eau Claire, educators in Fall Creek describe their setting as "not typical" of rural education. They note that many of the students have parents who live on about 5 acres of land--not "really farmers." Many parents make their living in nearby Eau Claire, and many teachers live in Eau Claire and commute to Fall Creek.

About 80% of the graduating class of 70 goes on to college from Fall Creek. The drop out rate has never been above 8%, and is usually 2-4% according to the superintendent. The superintendent and other educators interviewed in the Fall noted the pride Fall Creek residents took in their school system, the waiting list to teach in the district, and the pro-education school board. By Spring, however, a 4 million dollar referendum to construct a new middle school had failed, and three board incumbents' positions were being challenged.

State educational reform had not yet had a great deal of impact on Fall Creek according to most interviewed, in part because the district had already complied with mandates. An example is the guidance program already in place in Fall Creek Elementary with help from earlier federal funding. The guidance program, several noted, is "a model for the state." If the school had not had a counselor and guidance program in place, the district would have had to do quite a bit to respond to this reform standard. Planned inservices responding to the 21 reform standards included topics focused on AIDS, suicide prevention, and at-risk students. Forthcoming reform requirements included setting up a gifted and talented program and a K-3 remedial reading program. These are discussed in more detail in the second section of this report.

Fall Creek Elementary School. Fall Creek Elementary School is laid out in a T. From east to west are the fifth and fourth grades, the learning center and central office, and the second and first grades and kindergartens. From north to south are the third grades, the multi-purpose room, music room, and in attached units at the end of the T, rooms for Chapter I, LD and ED classes. There are three sections at each grade level with the exception of kindergarten which only had two sections this year. The elementary staff consists of 16 regular teachers, 1 special education and 1 learning disability teacher, a guidance counselor, a half-time reading coordinator and Chapter I staff member, another half-time Chapter I teacher and a half-time speech clinician.

The average age of teachers is 45-50, their average tenure in Fall Creek about 12 years. Many have been teaching at the present grade level for over 10 years.

Mr. Smith has a building budget of $57,000. That budget permits involvement in the Oklahoma Project (notebook and organization system for students), as well as $3600 for library books. A substantial part of the budget is directed to the school library where four more computers were purchased for student use last year.

Six moms work as aides in the learning center--they provide considerable help. There was a 100% turn out of parents at the last Parent Conference, and the principal and parent workers have been involved this year in promoting Wisconsin's Year of the Family in Education. Parents receive regular letters from Mr. Smith, the principal. The guidance counselor, Anita Husby, works closely with all classrooms and with parents. Down the hallways are colorful bulletin boards, displays of student work, and seasonal decorations. Likewise, the learning center is brightly decorated and you're likely to see students working on an island of Apples as you pass by, or the media specialist, Irene Swaboda, reading stories to the first graders dressed as Mother Goose. Pop corn day is Wednesday in the teachers' lounge where you can usually find comfortable dialogue and informal exchanges about students and lessons. The atmosphere appears upbeat as do teachers' perceptions of their school and their jobs.

Students in Fall Creek are dressed in jeans and Reebox. There is one minority student in the school. One student with muscular dystrophy buzzes down the hall in his wheel chair. A special elevator was installed to help him get from one level to another in the building.

Reading Instruction Context. The district Reading Coordinator, Mrs. Lois Papke, works closely with Mr. Smith. In addition to coordinating the reading program, she teaches classes of Chapter I students most of each day. Lois and Anita Husby go over reading scores each year and Lois makes adjustments to the reading curriculum based upon reported progress. Developmental reading through the eighth grade is Lois's responsibility, and, next year, she will be handling the newly mandated remedial reading program for K-3. Lois has been at this job for 12 years; she plays an influential role in selecting texts and standardized tests, and designing curriculum in this key curricular area.

According to a number of staff, the staff development in reading instruction provided this year through the Wisconsin Project represents a considerable investment compared to a "typical" year. Typically, for example, there might be two one-and-one-half hour inservices on reading instruction during the year. Few teachers would be taking coursework in reading instruction. And there would be no systematic followup or followthrough on the inservices or coursework that did take place. Mr. Smith noted that compared to the past, this was probably the most intensive inservice offered in the school in the past 10-12 years.

How Fall Creek implemented the Reading Improvement Project. Fall Creek's leadership team consists of the principal, Mr. Smith, the reading specialist, Lois Papke, and the media specialist, Irene Swoboda. Target teachers selected comprise the third grade "team"--Jan Kuhnert, Ken Anderson, and Terry Fellenz, and fifth grade teacher Wayne Webster. One target teacher has a masters, two are working on their masters. The third grade team has worked together well over the years and is highly regarded by the leadership team.

By my Fall arrival, target teachers had watched 4 of the videotaped inservice programs on teaching reading (1, 2, 3, and 9) and listened to 3 of the radio program audiotapes. One target teacher had used Storylords last year but was told not to use it this year until "the project got to that point." Having watched the videotape on story mapping, many were using this strategy for their book reports.

Teachers had all done metacognitive interviews with students and submitted them to Lois. None had been involved in teleconferences or use of the bulletin board. Most were becoming familiar with the Paris reading kit, some using posters and ideas from the kit. Everyone had received a copy of Becoming a Nation of Readers but there were not enough state curriculum guides to go around (this was to be remedied by Spring).

Mr. Smith decided to familiarize his entire staff with the strategic reading instruction tapes so as to promote their adoption to other grade levels in the subsequent year. To that end, monthly morning inservices around the videotaped programs included all staff in the building. Videotapes were housed in the media center so that teachers could check out tapes if they so chose.

While the three third grade teachers were obviously working closely together, the reading specialist had not been to their rooms to model new teaching strategies or to systematically evaluate them. However, Lois was team teaching with Mr. Webster in the late morning. It was apparent that she had more project responsibilities than hours in which to complete them.

According to the media specialist, with the exception of one videotaped program all teachers in the school were responding positively to the programs. She noted that many took notes and commented on the usefulness of what they heard.

Initial reactions to the Wisconsin Project design. Philosophically and practically key players in this intervention at Fall Creek seemed to buy into the general approach. That is, leadership team members (the principal, reading specialist, and media specialist) saw the reading approach as "sensible" and "helpful," the idea of a leadership team as potentially workable, and the notion of having and using more technology a good idea. Two staff members applauded the coordinated effort between the Wisconsin DPI and WPRTN. The principal's involvment seemed a good idea as did such a concerted and concentrated effort in a particular content area. Atleast one team member noted this was a much better strategy for getting teachers to make real changes.

Initial reactions to project implementation. The Fall brought a number of tactical problems in the startup of the project. For example, some staff maintained that the late startup in August had made it difficult to get districts organized for the project. Additionally, both teachers and leadership team members expressed concern over the initial lack of clarity in what they were to do and how. Target teachers were unsure of their roles after the Oct. 8 meeting with project staff in Eau Claire.

There were immediate and persistent problems throughout the Fall in the delivery and use of technology. For example, initial televised programs could not all be taped. Requests from a local CESA brought low-quality tapes that couldn't be used. Finally, the district invested $80.00 and bought its own set of videotapes so as not to be bound by the televised schedule for the series. The narrowband radio programs didn't come through well enough to be audiotaped in the district. A patch card was needed and the district media specialist was sent to retrieve it. Teleconferencing was limited to the reading specialist due to the need for a modem and because the speaker system that would permit others in the room to become involved was not delivered. Finally, the modem that would allow the district to access the electronic bulletin board for distict-project and district-district communication was not delivered.

Coupled with these problems were scattered frustrations in dealings with Wisconsin Project staff. For example, there were reports of two sarcastic letters that directed the district to solve its problems, some calls not returned, and failure to provide onsite visits to address technology problems. One staff noted, "communication between them and us has to become more positive. They're overloaded, so are we."

Finally, there were initial problems in the presentation of the reading material itself. Atleast one of the first three videotaped inservice programs was seen as weak by all staff watching it. This held true for the first two narrowband radio programs (likened to an undergraduate reading course), as well as the first teleconference ("conversation didn't help us learn anything"). In other words, some content they were receiving was reviewed critically. Some expressed a feeling of "being talked down to" with one staff member noting that there was a feeling across district personnel that project staff "assumed people in northern Wisconsin didn't know anything about reading."

The Reading Specialist questioned the selected sequencing of some of the programs and materials--resequencing videotapes where she thought it would help her staff. In particular, Lois noted that there was an overwhelming amount of material being sent to her by project staff. The task of simply reading it was quickly becoming a problem, and she had very little direction for winnowing through it to decide what to pass on to target teachers. Target teachers also reported being overwhelmed with the amount of material and new ideas they had to deal with--without released time or the opportunity to observe others modeling new skills.

Observations of project implementation. Regardless of upsets in project startup or criticisms of project delivery, district staff maintained their basic belief that the staff development content and approach was sensible and useful. This was apparent in target teacher and reading specialist classrooms.

Vignettes that follow depict teacher and student dialogue in strategic reading instruction. Each one is excerpted from observations of full reading lessons observed during the Fall visit.

Chapter I first grade class: Papke

VANS--Review of Prior Knowledge

T What did we learn about vans the other day?

S wheels go round; vans have lights, windshield wipers, muffler, axle, windows

T Who comes to our house in a van?

S someone who comes to fix our pipes; helpers; cleaning people; electric people; T.V. repairmen

T I want to review some words before we read our story. "Work." What do we know about this word?

...

T Everyone knows what work is. Let's look at our title "The Work Van." What is a work van?

...

T I need to know if you know what this mark is "!" Where do we put this mark?

S at the end of an exciting sentence

T So when we read them, we have to read them with a little excitment in our voice (demonstrates).

T What are these " " called?

T They go around what people say. I think we're ready to read now that we've reviewed.

T Look at the picture. Where are we today?

S park

T What makes you think it's the park?

S pop cans; trees; playground

T We're ready to read. What do you want to find out when you read?

S if Sara and Ken work; if mess gets cleaned up

[Students read each page line by line in round robin fashion. They are directed to stop at the bottom of each page to discuss what happened on that page.]

T How many of you like to work hard?
What was the problem in this story about the work van?

S playground was dirty

T How did we fix the problem?

S by cleaning up

T Who cleaned up?

S all the people--Ken, Beth, Jim, Sara, Anna; all of them should get paid

T We'll read the story over once more. If you do a good job, you'll each get a sticker (and they did).

5th grade class: Webster

Prior Knowledge, Literal, Inferential and Personal Meaning

T What does a light bulb mean to you?
S ideas; turning on your brain; opening your mind; like an idea in a cartoon
T These light bulbs are about different kinds of meaning.
T Literal meaning--easy kind of questions to ask and answer...(provides an example from science--ecosystem)
T Inferential meaning--like gravity you must reason through.
If I said the man had grey hair and walked with a cane...what would you suspect about him?
S old
T To get inferential meaning you read between the lines, you figure out what the author is trying to tell you, you use hints.
T Personal meaning is meaning special to you. When I read *Where the Red Fern Grows* it reminded me of when my own retriever died--the book had personal meaning to me. Have you read something that had personal meaning?

. . .

S personal meaning is like prior knowledge

. . .

T LIP--literal, inferential, personal. Let's look for these meanings in "Furry Flights." Before you start reading, I want to remind you to paraphrase--to say in your own words what you read. Now you can begin.

. . .

T Here are some literal questions. What were the boys' names? What do dogs chase?

. . .

T Were the boys neighbors? How do you know?
S it says they yelled at each other over the fence
T Which boy has the cat? How do you know?

. . .

T What kind of personal meaning does this story have for you? Do you argue with your friends? Do you like dogs or cats better?

3rd grade: Kuhnert

Story Mapping

T   We've been talking about using reading strategies. What reading strategies did we work on yesterday? Before we read, what do we do?
S   read the title; look at the pictures; think
T   While we are reading, what do we do?
S   stop; think; concentrate
T   Everytime we read, we can find a teasure--what is it?
S   knowledge; meaning of stories; information
T   We'll talk about other strategies today. Today we'll work on story mapping. How many of you know what an architect does?

. . .

T   Does an architect make a plan? What is that plan called? How does it help the builder?

. . .

T   Authors have plans, just like architects. . .
T   Let's look at the bulletin board. What is the setting of a story?
S   background; where it happens; when it happens
T   Who are the main characters?
S   most important people in story; sometimes they can be animals; sometimes they are in the title
T   What is a goal?
S   something you want to do bad
T   What is an example of a problem in a story?
S   (examples from Wizard of Oz; Cinderella; Snow White)
T   What is an episode--does anyone know?
S   things that happen; sometimes they have to be continued
T   What is the resolution of a story?
S   how they solve the problem; what happens at the end
T   Let's see if we can story map Three Billy Goats Gruff. Listen and see if you can hear the parts of the story map.

[Reads the story with much expression--kids are delighted]

T   What is the title...
What is the setting?
S   grassy hillside; by a bridge; once upon a time
T   Who are the main characters?
S   three goats (describe); troll
T   What's the goal of the story?
S   get on other side of bridge and eat grass
T   What are the episodes?

[With some effort, students tell about little, middle size and large goat, working to separate out parts.]

T What is the resolution?
S large goat knocks troll into river

3rd grade class: Anderson

Semantic and Story Mapping

T We have been talking about folkstories in our reader. I brought one to read with you today. [Pulls out book] What are we going to do first?

S look at cover; read title
T The title is Elves and the Shoemaker. What do you know about elves? What do you think about when you picture elves?

[On board he places "elves" in a circle. On spokes coming from circle he writes students' responses: little; helpful; toys; Santa Claus; wear hats; nasty; good makers; shoes with bells.]

T What do you know about shoemakers?

[Places shoemaker in a circle, probes with these questions: where did your shoes comes from; where did Indians' shoes come from; why did shoemakers use to be important; why aren't they as important now; if a boy in school is named "shoemaker" how do you suppose he got that name; why don't we know much about shoemakers now?]

T Let's look at the cover of the book. What can we learn from it?
S season; time of day; size of elves; kind of elves they are--good
T Let's look at the pictures on the first couple of pages and see if we can learn about the setting.
S in a house; in mountains; in the wintertime
T Look at the first sentence, "Many, many years ago there was a village named..." What is the setting?

. . .

T Let's read the first three pages and see if you can figure out what the problem is and what the goal is. . . . What is the shoemaker's problem?
S doesn't have leather to make shoes;
T What is the shoemaker's goal?
S to get food for family
T Tomorrow we will read to find the episodes in the book.

3rd grade: Fellenz

Sequencing and Story Mapping

Begins with two short exercises to demonstrate the importance of proper sequence. The first is a set of directions for a math problem that leads to a number. The number in turn is a page in their reader where they find the "magic word." The second exercise involves arranging the following four sentences in logical sequence:

The cat saw the milk on the table
The milk spilled all over the floor
The cat jumped up onto the table
The cat knocked over the milk

T [Draws an oyster on board] What is this?
S clam; oyster
T What do you know about oysters? [Frames the word on board and begins to write student responses around it]
S live in sea; live in shells; hurt your feet if you step on them; lay thousands of eggs; travel on the botton of the sea; you can eat them; they have pearls
T Think of how much prior knowledge we already have about oysters. [Introduces the word "mussle" which will be in the story]

Story maps a short children's book entitled "The Pearl." Goes through title, setting, main characters, problem, goal, episodes, and resolution.

T Did story mapping take our story from beginning to end?
Did we leave anything out?
Did we learn something more about oysters?

Students in each of the target classrooms are grouped by ability; the third graders, for instance, leave their home classrooms at 1:00 and move to another room for their reading lesson. The "lower" achieving group is in Mr. Anderson's room, "higher" in Mrs. Kuhnert's room, "middle" in Mr. Fellenz's room. Mr. Webster also has a "lower" achieving group. In the third grade, before students leave, they are read aloud to by their teacher--a common practice recently reinforced at the Wisconsin Reading Association conference.

Fall evaluation of progress by district staff. In exit interviews with the leadership team and target teachers, they were asked to think about progress they had made, problems unresolved, and challenges ahead. Regardless of criticisms, self-directed and project-directed, it was apparent that the team felt positively about their accomplishments, their continued involvement in the project, and their progress in improving reading instruction.

Unanswered questions. There were questions about the impact of the strategic reading approach on traditionally taught areas in reading--such as phonics. (Phonics has not been dropped and teachers and reading specialist don't think it should be.) While all district staff advocate the strategic reading approach, they don't want standardized test scores to drop due to changes in emphasis, and Lois doesn't want to lose ground in decoding skills critical at K-3. Similarly, there was the doubt that abandoning the basal reader and moving to tradebooks was a sensible idea for all teaching staff.

Staff spent a good deal of time discussing "Where does the basal fit it? How much time should be spent on the basal?"

A related question had to do with grouping. By Fall they were wondering whether they should try abandoning the "ability" grouping in favor of heterogenous classes. The strategic reading approach seemed to invite, if not favor, inclusion of a wider range of students, skill levels, and experience bases.

There were also unanswered questions about how to organize, sequence, and merge much of the information received this year. For example, how should they reconcile the different terminology in the Paris materials, Storylords and the Curriculum Guide. And, should they use prior knowledge from Paris before moving to inferencing.

For the leadership team, some unanswered questions revolved around role definitions--what each was to do. They discussed whether some of their responsibilities ought to be written into job descriptions.

An important set of unanswered questions revolved around plans for the next year. How much support would they get from the project, how much funding. How should they sequence and organize materials. What about inservicing other teachers--should this year's teachers serve as mentors. What kind of resources should they devote to the program, how much time. The reading curriculum has to be updated by 1988, should strategic reading be incorporated--will this conflict with time needed for its implementation this year. How should Lois's role be defined, and so forth.

Looking ahead. The advocacy of the reading specialist was seen as critical in gaining acceptance of this new strategy. And the all-staff inservices were seen as "planting the seed" so that the program could be moved to other grade levels. Regardless of funding, the team had made the commitment by Fall to stick with the reading program the next year.

A one-credit, Board certified course focusing on the Teaching Reading videotapes had been planned for Spring term. Offered through UW Eau Claire, this allowed target teachers and other staff the opportunity to review the materials in a structured fashion, and to receive university or board credit for doing so. Six staff had enrolled from the elementary school, 5 from the high school, and none from the middle school.

Bottomline there was a wait-and-see attitude about many aspects of the program. "We'll know more by Spring," and "We're not sure where everybody else is," and "By Spring, we'll have the technology in place...be further along...know more about our direction." When asked if they would recommend the project at this point to other districts, the answer was "yes."

Constraints. A real problem is the lack of time Lois has to carry on many of the defined responsibilities for the project. She is a fulltime teacher and a fulltime coordinator. Project reading specialist adds a new and demanding set of responsibilities to what is already a full day. The overwhelming amount of material sent to her compounds the sense of burden. She talked about turning over role modeling to target teachers, certainly some strategies for leveraging responsibilities seemed critical.

Recommendations. Target teachers urged that more tapes and materials be provided that demonstrate teachers modeling strategies. They noted that the scheduling of radio and TV programs was unrealistic given coaching and other teaching responsibilities--taped programs were essential. They wished they had more released time to work with each other, observe and evaluate what they were doing. Finally, they urged project staff to cut down on the amount of information initially delivered, most of which they found more confusing than helpful.

The recommendations for project staff generally were staightforward. Install technology before project meetings begin next year, winnow and organize material for district use, provide followthrough support to give feedback.

Highlights. Target teachers recommended the use of the Paris materials, and the Storylords booklet. They particularly liked the videotaped program on story mapping, and the strategy itself.

Lois noted the value of the state Curriculum Guide which was to be used to update district curriculum plans. They hoped to get enough copies to distribute to all staff soon as she felt it had good information for teacher implementation as well as for school modifications.

The visit by DPI reading specialist Doris Cook (part of the Wisconsin project staff) obviously had been welcome and helpful. Doris's reactions to their work led them to believe they were on the right track. Her feedback and her interest were taken seriously.

How the project has changed reading instruction. When asked if the project had led to real changes in how they were teaching reading, there were positive and animated responses. Everyone thought their approach to teaching reading had been changed significantly by the strategic reading materials--and changed for the better. One teacher remarked "I was teaching skills only," and another, "I gave them more literal comprehension tasks without even knowing it," and a third, "I was more concerned about assignments and grades."

Together they discussed how "trivial" the questions were at the end of selections in their basal readers and social studies books. Atleast one teacher had discussed this triviality with students in class, asking how important some of the questions were to understanding a selection. A side effect of the new approach, one teacher noted, was that "when it comes time for grades, I'm not sure what I'll give them." This was said without a great sense of worry, but , awareness that the new strategy had changed the basal-reader grading system they were used to in reading.

Reconciling constraints and gains. There seemed to be a discrepancy between how much progress had been made--how successful this group appeared to be in implmenting strategic reading--and reported problems relative to the content and delivery of project-related materials. I asked about this. Specifically, I wondered if they thought they could have done as well by enrolling their teachers in the UW Eau Claire course and handling the project themselves within the district.

Generally the response was that the present stratgey "was much better." They liked the involvement of someone other than inhouse staff, welcomed outside experts and the involvement of the DPI which gave "validity" to the project. The addition of new technology and the stipend were seen as bonuses. The proposed communication network of "experts" and peers was seen as a benefit which just hadn't yet materialized.

SPRING

On March 23-26 I returned to Fall Creek. This time my classroom visits caused less concern to target teachers, but substantial alarm to non-target teachers whose classes I was to visit for sake of comparison. Change and outside visitors are viewed with no little anxiety by some staff, and the principal's reassurance about why I was there was very important, as was the support of the reading specialist.

Progress. Much had happened during the previous four months. The teleconferencing equipment had been installed and the staff had been involved in their first project-related conference. The principal had involved all the teachers in the school. The equipment also had been used to communicate with a professor at the University of Wisconsin on plans for the state-mandated gifted and talented program to be developed in the district. (This latter conference call was viewed as more helpful.) A conference call is planned for the April board meeting to demonstrate the use of this equipment to board members.

The electronic bulletin board had been up and working since late January. It's potential was not yet known, but it seemed a welcome addition--the reading specialist was mastering it, and the media specialist was handling routine communications. Messages came in during my visit though unfortunately we ran into problems trying to get information out during the week.

All teaching staff had watched 8 of the Teaching Reading videotapes. While 7 radio programs had been broadcast (and an antennae to aid reception added to the roof), not all of them had gotten to district staff. This was due in part to confusion about which team member received and was to set up the schedule for taping the broadcasts. Also, however, the radio broadcasts appear not to be valued much--a persistent reaction from last Fall. Incentives for listening to them are not great.

Each target teacher, and the reading specialist, had been videotaped teaching a reading strategy during the past four-month period. One of these videotapes had been used in an inservice for all school staff. The tapes were being collected for use next year when the project is moved to all the fourth and fifth grades.

All the target teachers were using the Paris materials, and most were through them. Doris Cook had sent another set of posters since the team had only one kit.

Most district project staff had been to the micro-computer fair in Eau Claire, the thinking conference in Wassau and the Wisconsin Reading Association conference in Occonomawoc. The media specialist reported that most of the reading-related software that had been previewed for project use at the fair had already been purchased by the district. The target teachers and the reading and media specialists were enthusiastic about the reading conference and the degree to which their knowledge of strategic reading had served them well there. This conference obviously had been a highlight for the target teachers, all of whom hoped they could attend again the next year.

All target teachers as well as some non-target teachers had begun to use Storylords in their classrooms. The videotaped programs, one of which was observed, were popular with students. Noone was using the Apple microcomputer programs that are available with this series.

The media specialist noted that many more teachers were beginning to use technology. Specifically, many teachers were checking out VCRs for the first time.

The project team had spent time together at conferences, but had not had regularly scheduled meetings at school. The leadership team also had not met regularly as a team, though there were obviously a growing number of issues and activities they had to coordinate.

Mr. Smith had provided regular updates about the reading project at every board meeting. He had support to use other funds when the $800 project stipend for this semester ran out, but substitute teacher needs remained. Also, he had sought district support to send target teachers to the reading conference.

Following are excerpts from classroom observations of reading lessons during the Spring visit. A lesson from a non-target second-grade teacher has been included to demonstrate some of the differences in traditional use of the basal and a reading lesson guided by principles of strategic reading.

2nd grade: Non-target teacher

Basal reading lesson "The Pickle Plan," Ginn Series

T Our story for the day is "The Pickle Plan." We will meet in our story: Rachel, Michael, and Ms. Ronow. We will see these words in our story: attention, interested, interesting, mysterious, pickle, class, giving. Who can use "interesting" for me in a sentence? [Goes through each word with students providing sentences.]

T Read the sentences on the board to yourself and see which one of our words should go in the blank. [When someone is reading to you, you should pay __________.] Now lets read the sentences aloud. [When the class gets to the blank, she calls on a student to give answer. Class goes through four sentences.]

T We're going to read this story about Rachel who tries out three plans. I wonder why she tries three plans? I think when you read the first page you can figure out in a roundabout way. Let's read the title aloud. "The Pickle Plan." What is that...maybe we will find out on the first page. On the first page you have two things to look for. Read only the first page. When you're done, shut your books.

T Why does Rachel have a plan?

S to get attention

T Have you ever wanted to get attention? Maybe you brought a toy to school you wanted to show. What kind of a person was Rachel?

S kinda greedy?

T No.

S wonders alot

T What's another name for a person who wonders alot?

S mysterious; snoopy

T No. I'm thinking of another word.

S day dreamer

T This little girl was very curious. Nicole what was she curious about... Well, lets open our books and see if you can find the answer.

. . .

T How did she feel about people not paying attention to her?

S kinda sad

T And so what did she decide to do?

S she said she would do something different

T Different--that's a good word. She decided to wear her mother's hat and call it her pickle plan. She's all smiles, did the children pay attention? Did her plan work?

S no

T Why didn't the plan work?

S teacher wouldn't let her wear the hat

T So the "different" plan didn't work. So she tried another kind of plan, lets see what kind of plan she tried next. Lets read page 148.

. . .

T Okay, find the words that tell you the third plan. Look at your book and find the title to the third plan. Find it? It's right at the top of the page you just read. What does it say? The... The... Can't you find it? I'll read the sentence with you [class reads sentence with teacher]. So it's called the "lively" plan. Now look through the page and find out what she does to get attention in the lively plan.

. . .

T Maybe you can reread the story tomorrow.

S can we have a pickle party tomorrow

T I don't think so.

5th grade: Webster

STRARO and Prior Knowledge

T Imagine yourself going to a foreign country. What is a problem you might encounter?
S speak a different language; drive on wrong side of the road; might not dress the same; don't know where to go
T When you read the next story, a girl will go to Mexico and find herself in a jam. I want you to read the story and fill our a story map [hands out]. Before you begin, what are you going to do with old ideas?
S bridge them; use our three light bulbs
T Why will you read?
S for meaning
T What kind of meaning?
S literal; inferential; personal; LIP
T There will be seven episodes in the story. Turn to it. What's the first thing you are going to do?
S read title
T Second thing...
S activate our prior knowledge
T Then...
S look at pictures
T After each paragraph, what should you do?
S stop and put it in your own words
T Why?
S if you can't put it in your own words, you don't understand it

[Students read and teacher moves from student to student looking over story maps being filled out.]

3rd grade: Anderson

Predicting and Semantic Mapping

T In the last Storylords we worked on predicting. Kelly picked out a book from the library today that will work perfectly for today's lesson. Kelly will you hold up your book? What is the title?

S The Treasure

T Look at the picture on the cover, can you predict what is going to happen?

S old man, poor man going off to find treasure [students spend about five minutes conjecturing on details on cover and what they might indicate about the story]

T Kelly, will you read the book for us:

. . .

T Were your predictions right? [yes, discussion ensues]

T I have a sign here on the bulletin board about searching for hidden reading treasure. Let's talk a minute about tresure--what is a treasure?

S bag of gold; jewels; dollars; rubies

T Does something have to be expensive to be precious?

S no

T Do you have something you treasure that may be something you couldn't or wouldn't sell? [On the board is the outline of a large leather pouch, in the middle is written the word "gold." As students call out their treasures, Mr. Anderson writes them inside the pouch: microscope, Poppel, stuffed alligator, bike, cycle, dog, cat, sleeping bag, Cabbage Patch doll, hamster, Pluto.]

T How can reading be a treasure? What are you looking for when you read?

S information; meaning; fun

[Makes reading assignment with the hidden treasure metaphor in mind]

3rd grade: Kuhnert

Prior knowledge and Storylords

T Today we are going to watch Storylords. Let's review what we've learned.
Prior knowledge--why do we activate our prior knowledge?

S connect what we know with what we read

T What is STRARO?

S stop; think; reread; ask; read over

T Look up here at the board. Here's three strategies and I'll help you work through them. [Previewing Storylord tape to be watched, Mrs. Kuhnert probes for answers to the following three questions: Before I read I will (read title, look at pictures, think about what I already know, guess or predict what will happen); When I read I will (look for clues, change ideas or revise); and After I read I will (stop, think about the guesses I made and try to prove)]

T How can you prove your prediction or your guess about a story?

S find a sentence in the story that tells your answer

T Before we turn on the T.V. set, let's review some new words you may hear during the program. [Words are in sentences and she has students search for "context clues" in the sentence. When a student knows a word, they tell what prior knowledge they used to figure it out]

[Student turns out the light and students watch Storylords on T.V.]

3rd grade: Fellenz

Prior knowledge, Story Mapping and Hidden Meaning

T Here's another book we're publishing from our class. [The class has put together about 6 collections of their own stories this year.] What's different about this book?
S has no pictures
T Does every book have to have pictures?
S no
T What do you do when you have no pictures?
S you picture in your head

. . .

T Let's review the story map we did of our last story. [On the board is a large pie divided into the following segments: title, characters, setting, six episodes that describe the plot line, and resolution.] Tomorrow you will "tell" this story using your story maps--not notes written down.

. . .

T Let's review some riddles and puns to see if we can find the difference between literal and inferential meaning. What is the literal meaning of "The early bird gets the worm."
S the first bird gets the worm
T What's the inferential meaning?
S if you get there early, you'll get the best part
T How about, "Don't cry over spilled milk"?
S if you spill milk, don't cry
T What is the inferential meaning?
S if you make a mistake, don't cry
T Does anyone else have some riddles? [Class begins to tell jokes. Teacher points out use of homonyms, use of prior knowledge, literal vs. inferential meanings in jokes.]

Spring evaluation of progress by district staff. If anything, Spring found the Fall Creek staff more fluent in and more positive about strategic reading. They seemed confident in all apects of the materials, used the terminology freely, and didn't bring up feelings of being overwhelmed or burdened as they had in the Fall. Tactical concerns persisted, of course, but the overall reaction to the project was good.

How the project had changed reading instruction. The target teachers' remarks were even more enthusiastic by Spring--testimonials to strategic reading:

"Strategies make so much sense. I'm not sure why we didn't think of this years ago--too busy checking workbooks I guess."

"The kids are picking up a new language--they discuss prior knowledge and inferential thinking. When I showed them a picture book without words, a student said, 'We have to use our inferential thinking on this.'"

"In science all my kids' scores are up because of their reading."

"I use strategic reading more in social science than in reading. It seems to help them pick out main ideas. They realize they don't have to remember everything--or just factual information. I use semantic maps on everything all the time."

"We're doing a lot more reading--more recreational reading. We've read two extra books."

"We don't write as much during reading. Kids say, 'Oh, is reading over,' and 'No Storylords today.' They're really disappointed."

"We've been doing more paragraphs, main ideas, and avoiding the Focus questions at the end of basal lessons. Before this, they would avoid finding main-idea sentences in paragraphs."

"It embarrasses me sometimes to think of how I taught reading."

Observations reinforce teacher self-assessments. That is, the language of strategic reading and the strategies themselves appear to be assimilated into routine reading lessons in each of the target classes.

Looking ahead. The district team anticipated a number of different issues that would effect the reading project the next year. Reform requirements to begin a K-3 remedial program (for students who are not covered by Chapter I, but still have reading problems) mean a change in assignment for Lois Papke. She will be the teacher for this new program, and likely will need to begin work on it this summer. This means, once again, it will be difficult to get time set aside for role modeling and visiting classes.

There was an expressed need for planning time next year--time coordinated so that teachers could work together.

Teachers hoped to integrate materials for new teachers coming aboard next year. There also was a felt need to sequence materials like the Paris kit and Storylords from 3-5 so that students didn't have material repeated.

Lois and the teachers discussed organizing materials for next year. Lois indicated if she had time she'd like to categorize material first by strategy, then by sequence (strategies used before, during, and after reading). Also, there was discussion about reviewing new basal series that are trying to incorporate strategic reading concepts.

Fianally, while the fourth and fifth grade teachers are positive about joining the project next year, the first and second grade teachers still are reluctant about getting involved. This may turn out to be a problem.

Recommendations. Recommendations to Wisconsin Project Staff were fairly specific by Spring. They included:

Provide inservice for leadership team.

Provide one notebook for district staff, the smaller the better, and put it together in conjunction with representative teachers and reading specialists who had experience implementing the project in the field this year.

Provide face-to-face meetings next Fall to help district people feel comfortable using teleconferencing and bulletin board.

Give specific objectives to leadership team so they can determin who will be responsible for what.

Videotape modeling of each strategy in participant classrooms and share with all districts.

Use teleconferencing for districts to talk to each other about questions they share; for example, are teachers working with fewer groups so better students can model, and how do they meet the challenge of working with less capable students when using these strategies.

Constraints and problems. The first teleconference of 1 hour and 15 minutes did not receive positive reviews. It covered an article that staff said was too scholarly and academic. They felt many people "didn't want to say anything." They wished they could have talked to the other teachers about more familiar and pressing problems.

The volumes of material sent out by the Project has not been viewed as effective. Target teachers had not seen much of it and both teachers and reading specialist appear not to have the time to go over it.

Most negative were remarks about the narrowband radio programs/tapes. There was a real question about the merits of radio, and the value of the programs themselves. District staff had not heard the last several programs.

The value of the bulletin board is still up in the air. The staff hoped to train an aide next year to print out the messages and get them to appropriate people. While teleconferencing and the bulletin board seemed potentially useful for district-district communication, the staff didn't have many defined purposes for their use as yet. It takes a good deal of time to get on the bulletin board. Once on, Irene reports, you have to read an hour's worth of messages that appear to be irrelevant. Training may be useful, but when to use it is another question. Users need to discriminate between open and private messages so that you don't have to go through an hour and a half of messages only to find there is no message for you.

Leadership team. There were some mixed reviews about the use of the leadership team. While team members generally thought it was a good idea, the principal noted that Lois was by necessity the "team member" who had to work the hardest on this project. This brings up the appropriateness of the "team" metaphor. Lois feels very responsible, for example, for selecting school reading materials and spearheading the reading project. Being a member of a team doesn't alleviate her responsibility, and, quite sensibly, she doesn't want it to affect her authority.

The media specialist felt more information had been provided to clarify the role of the reading specialist than that of the media specialist. While she wanted to be helpful, she also was concerned about inadvertently making decision in collecting, distributing, or organizing reading material that might be perceived as belonging to the reading specialist.

The principal was comfortable with his role on the team which he felt was that of facilitator. He is an aggressive advocate of both the project and the team members and has promoted both within the school and at board meetings.

When asked if the leadership team could use more role definition, team members' responses varied from "perhaps" to "definitely." It was apparent to the evaluator that project duties could change job responsibilities, and in such a small organizational system, that could lead to conflict even when team members wish to avoid it.

Most important instructional benefits. For teachers, the important benefits were the real changes--improvements--they were seeing in their classrooms. They also had received a great deal of professional satisfaction from attending the reading conference. Their success in the project this year seemed to please them.

The reading specialist, Lois, felt that perhaps the most imporant result was that generalizeable reading strategies had been mastered that could and would transfer to other content areas. She felt especially positive about how target teachers had worked togesther, about the usefulness of the Teaching Comprehension videotapes, and the initial success of the UW Eau Claire course at Fall Creek focused on these videotapes. That course includes in its enrollment both target teachers and other K-12 teachers including some from the high school.

Mr. Smith noted that he was pleased that staff had been willing to try this new strategy. He thought the material had changed some teaching styles, gotten students excited, and reinforced teaching.

Reactions of Fall Creek Staff to Case Study. On Thursday afternoon, May 12, 1988 the Fall Creek leadership team and target teachers and I had a conference call to review the case study sent to them two weeks before. The conversation lasted about 45 minutes of the scheduled hour. About a half dozen revisions were recommended by Fall Creek staff. For the most part they represented corrected facts (e.g. the kindergarten not the fifth grade had two rather than three sections this year).

I asked if any staff member would like to write a letter to me to be appended to the case study providing their own personal perspective. They said they felt I had done a good job of telling their story. Generally our exit interview was lighthearted and positive. Ken Anderson said that he felt evaluation could be uncomfortable and threatening and wanted me to know that he had not felt that way when I visited. Together we discussed the positive quality of the evalution from my perspective and theirs. Finally, we talked for a minute about our next scheduled conversation. They plan to call my home May 16 during the evening board meeting so that together we can report to the board about the Wisconsin Project.

FITTING PROJECT WITH PEOPLE IN RURAL WISCONSIN: A CASE STUDY EVALUATION

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May 15, 1988

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INTRODUCTION

This report is about what happens when people, purposes and apparatus intertwine to implement a change in reading instruction for students of an elementary school. It offers a qualitative evaluation of a reading instruction staff development project as carried out in one of eighteen rural Wisconsin school districts under the joint auspices of the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks. The project name is the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project.

This case study evaluation attempts to represent the Project as it proceeded at Athens Elementary School (AES), the sole K-6 grade school in the Athens, Wisconsin school district.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The village of Athens, Wisconsin has a population of 988. It is located six miles off of a major two lane state highway in the midst of gradually rolling terrain and fertile farming lands of Marathon County in a west-central region of the state.

The highway sign announcing its location refers to it as a village of quality and progress. The billboard directly outside of town variably urges its citizens to "Take Time to

Read: Visit Your Marathon County Library," to give "The Best Gift You'll Ever Give: A Library Card," or to support to Future Farmers of America.

The people of the area are mostly rural, living on the surrounding dairy farms. They are ethnically Polish and German more than any other. Many of the farms have been held by the same families for three generations.

The economic yield from many of the farms is marginal and costs are rising. Property taxes, from which schools are supported, have become oppressive in the face of this low return from farming. Nearly every farm family has one spouse working off of the farm and most of them have both spouses working off of the farm besides doing the chores of farming. The Farm Crisis affects the community. Some families have lost their land. Stress has increased greatly. A growing number of families have been broken by separation and divorce. Many of their staunchly held attitudes and beliefs are beginning to erode. The people want something to change and they want more for their children. But they must be shown some directly observable benefit from innovation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Athens Elementary School has 240 students with programs from early childhood through sixth grade. The school staff numbers 29. Eighteen of those are full-time teachers. The average tenure of full-time teachers is fourteen years. Only two teachers are recent arrivals, two have taught there for over twenty years.

The faculty and staff speak of high morale as the hallmark of AES. Many point out the long and consistent tradition historically free from any major turmoil. The most notable aggravation comes from parents wondering what the teachers do to earn the money paid them.

Teaching styles range, by report, from old-fashioned to innovative and up-to-date. Faculty and staff take pride in staff-development. Sixteen of the teaching staff completed the Systematic Training for Effective Teaching program (Dinkmeyer et al. 1980) offered a year ago at the school. Much time and effort goes into subject by subject curricular review which they have been doing for the past three years. More than one person noted that change and up-dating around the school is a constant. One faculty member estimated and others agreed that at least sixty percent of the faculty was open to change. (Some of the faculty took exception to this when they read it, saying that every teacher was open to change.) Staff development done prior to this Project is far more notable to the faculty and staff than the staff-development entailed thus far by this Project. STET took much more time and involved many more people.

What is most characteristic of the climate of the school is care for the students. Emphasis is placed upon being affirmative; the faculty has adopted an assertive discipline program geared to rewards more than punishment. The atmosphere in classrooms and corridors reflects flexibility and ease, not regimentation or discomfort. From the moment the busses arrive, the students are greeted by name and shown that they belong. The setting is people-oriented.

Eating away at this affirmative attitude, however, is the element of disruption that various students are coming to experience and which affects their classrooms. It is estimated that two students per class of twenty-four suffer a family break-up each year. One tenth of the students are thus afflicted. Many students return home in the afternoon to have no parents at home because they are away at work. This translates into a growing number of discipline matters that demand teachers' attention. There is a growing impression that the lack of uniformity and consistency in discipline is creating the most noticeable drawback to a positive environment for the school.

Prior to getting a new District Administrator two years ago, the district was run without much innovation and without much new technology. That is changing. Technological innovation is a high priority of the District Administrator, and is meeting with a generally positive response among the staff. Several people agreed with the stated position that saw this technology as a remedy to rural isolation. This District Administrator will not be returning to Athens in the Fall.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Project are presented here as reported by the AES faculty and understood by the evaluator. One objective is the diffusion of a wholistic approach to reading. Another is the effective staff development of the target teachers and school-wide faculty. Another is familiarizing teachers with the Storylords videos and the strategies they embody. Another is the effective use of the Teaching Reading Comprehension videos. Another is to put in place and utilize the various forms of technology.

An objective stressed by Marge Wilsman that was not repeated by AES faculty was the importance of achieving "Mindfulness" in the use of the videos and reading comprehension strategies. This objective draws upon the research of Gabriel Salomon (1983, 1987) and Wilsman's own research (1987). But the principal held interviews with some of the students before and after teaching some of the strategies.

All in all, there did not seem to be any incongruity between the objectives of the Project and those of AES. The leadership team and target teachers were cognizant of and sympathetic to Project objectives.

COMMUNICATIONS

There have been great amounts of communication generated by the Project on at least four distinct levels: the level of content about reading, e.g. Storylords; the level of content about reading instruction, e.g. Teaching Reading Comprehension; the level of information about the Project and utilization of its technology; and the level of evaluation. The sheer amount of communication posed three kinds of difficulties: too much material to comprehend, difficulty in knowing what to emphasize, and too rapid a pace.

The people at AES responded to these three difficulties differently but one thing holds true across all: although the volume of communication was large, it was not considered unnecessary or unsuitable. The longer one had dealt with wholistic reading prior to the Project determined much about how she responded to the load, emphasis and pacing of communication.

The principal/reading specialist dealt with the approach the longest. She reported no overload of material; she successfully discriminated the most emphatic from the less so; and she recognized too rapid pacing and later found the pacing corrected.

The media specialist had been exposed to wholistic reading prior to the Project but less than the principal. She suffered the additional burden of dealing with inoperative technology. For her, the volume of communication was large but manageable, the emphases were more difficult to discern and when the pacing was corrected her expenditure of large amounts of time allowed her to manage well.

One target teacher was rather new to the approach and assiduously dealt with the volumes of communication--at great cost to her time and some cost to her certainty. From the outset she was uncertain about objectives. She needed time to grasp the concepts as well as to experiment with them. She figured out emphasis by discovery. The pacing left her feeling behind. Rather than discredit the communication, this teacher spent many additional hours to attend to it.

Another teacher dealt with the overload, emphasis and pacing differently. She avoided the overload, sifted through the emphases slowly and established her own pace apart from the Project.

Another teacher who has spent a great deal of time and energy in the wholistic approach for several years was immune to the Project load, emphasis and pacing because she was not a participant in the project. Her experience was that of not getting enough of the communication.

It can be noted that the burden of communication would have been greater if all the technology had been in place. Since it was not, the time spent in communications was lessened. For example, the teleconferencing equipment was unavailable, so only the principal participated in the calls during the first semester. The electronic bulletin board capability was installed late so the team members met no time demands with that.

TECHNOLOGY

The technological delivery system comprises a substantial amount of the attention of this Project. It affected the Project implementation and the people variously.

The Project was initiated at AES by the District Administrator who was drawn to the Project by the allurement of ITFS and the other technological components. He feels that technology can facilitate the flow of staff development and student learning to the rural districts. The ITFS was installed not in the elementary school but in the high school several blocks away.

The biggest set of complaints about Project implementation revolved around the technology, all of it in reference to the delayed installation and faulty operation of the equipment.

Reception of the narrow-band radio was faulty; static drowned out the sound on several early broadcasts. As a remedy the AES media specialist obtained audio tapes of the transmitted programs from a nearby school district. Members of the leadership team were then able to listen to the audio tape on their own time. A later sample tape sent to Madison proved acceptable.

The equipment needed for teleconference calls were not available to AES until late in the first semester, and once it was delivered it did not work because of the existing hook-up from the local telephone company. Technicians from the Project were helpful in trying to debug the equipment. They sent an entirely new set of equipment when the first set failed. They also advised AES about the possibility of problems with the utility hook-up. Despite this assistance, this equipment still is not operative as of the date of this report.

Additional help from the Project staff came in the form of the simplified instruction book for use of the Computer Bulletin Board. The visit by a staff person to AES to orient the media specialist to this facility was also very helpful.

AES did not have much experience with technological innovation before the Project. The media specialist is trained as a teacher, not in media. She had to spend a great deal of time learning about the equipment, debugging the equipment, and accommodating the videos to the schedules of the AES faculty.

It seems that becoming familiar with the utilization of technology proceeded on a different track from learning reading instruction strategies. Consequently, the technology was a distraction more than a complement to the content matter of reading comprehension. Furthermore, to the extent that the technology was intended to employ air-time viewing as a catalyst to team interaction, that objective of the Project was thwarted by inoperative equipment.

LOGISTICS

Logistics of the Project have been a hurdle at AES. This is seen in scheduling. Airing the Teaching Reading Comprehension videos at 3:30 p.m. made them inaccessible to AES as a group because their in-service time runs from 3:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. The sequencing of Storyland episodes did not constitute a problem at AES due to the slow paced implementation.

Finding time to have meetings was not particularly difficult since the principal arranges for substitute teachers. But each of the teachers insists that having a substitute in class does nothing to lighten the teaching load. Preparation for the substitute is a chore of its own. The substitute teachers do not cover as much as the teacher would; and modern wholistic reading methods are sometimes beyond the substitute's competency.

PERSONNEL

The report thus far has discussed relations between the Project and AES. This section and the next two will discuss the internal factors of AES, namely the people on the leadership team, the target teachers and faculty-wide staff development.

PRINCIPAL/READING SPECIALIST

The principal at AES is a bright, engaging professional well regarded by the faculty and staff. She imparts a steady, even keel quality to what goes on. With a master's degree in administration and special training for Chapter One Reading, she is versed in and convinced of modern wholistic reading methods. She serves also as reading specialist.

She is a calm enthusiast for the Project, its "sparkplug" on the site and does an exceptionally good job of modeling the strategies for Reading as Thinking comprehension. Her orientation to people over programs adds that tone and emphasis to the Project implementation. She has democratic tendencies and stresses flexible collegiality. The allegiance of faculty and staff gives her definite authority. Her approach to the school and the curriculum and her manner of administration are wholistic. She very consciously embodies and operates from a gradualist model of change and ownership which innnovates slowly. She begins from an assessment of her staff and builds upon the incentive of her people believing in what is being done and their feeling right and good about it. She expresses herself as willing to challenge elements of intransigence on a one-to-one basis.

Being both principal and reading specialist at AES is a convenience that fosters Project objectives and assures commitment to its implementation. But it is a handicap as well. It does not offer as much diversity or mutual reenforcement for the Project as two persons in those roles might. Strong supporting personnel could help her efforts on behalf of the Project.

The principal/reading specialist is the switchboard of the Project and has shaped its implementation at AES. She views the volume of communication as an appropriate basis for the exchange of ideas. She circulated nearly all of the materials received to all of the Project participants.

Some materials she judged appropriate for one or another and passed them on accordingly. She has shaped the implementation by knowing the needs of the school, by selecting the target teachers, by structuring the time taken by the participants, by orienting the in-services first to background research and then to practical implementation, by allowing freedom to the faculty to implement as they want to on their own, by highlighting materials that AES has that fit in with the Project, by procuring additional resources and supporting materials that AES does not have and by persuasively modeling what wholistic reading instruction can do.

MEDIA SPECIALIST

The second member of the leadership team is both the media specialist and a reading teacher. She shows measured optimism and enthusiasm for the Project, aware of the added demands that it makes upon her, responsible for coping with the delayed or faulty technology, and intrigued by the possibilities of both content and apparatus.

She speaks of the Project with a balanced sense of its potential and its technical drawbacks. She has found the Project coordinators very ready to help. She is at times overwhelmed by the utilization tasks as well as by the untapped resources that even minimal utilization foreshadows. She is also aware of the fact that many possibilities of the new technology and software are beyond the budgetary means of the District but plans to make the most of whatever resources can be directed to the new purpose. For example, the principal advised that the money she saved by not ordering workbooks could be spent for a larger array of paperbacks.

She speaks of being someone who is comfortable with established structure but admits that living with the demands of this Project makes structure unattainable more often than not. She reveals that this level of uncertainty is true regarding the process of teaching reading as well as it is regarding the technological apparatus but has resigned herself to this loss of control for the time being in light of the prospects that the Project and wholistic approach offer.

She feels that the Project delivery system already has had practical pay-offs. They include freeing the school from relative isolation with a sharing of ideas with other districts, gaining a sense of being a part of a broad and important undertaking as manifest by the national ITSF teleconference, becoming acquainted with the large amounts of materials available and finding that the Project coordinators could serve as a resource to screen out some of the poor products and promote some of the more valuable ones. A further pay-off that she experiences is the attraction that the technology can be fun and the reading instruction can be very effective. She suggests that "Even a little success can make converts of us all."

TWO TARGET TEACHERS

The two target teachers provide a contrast one to the other. They have each taught for over 25 years. They show enthusiasm, care for the children and commitment to the task. They each like what they are doing. They feel loyalty to AES. Both speak highly of the Project and feel that its implementation at AES is proceeding well in its personal features and its content areas but proceeding only haltingly in its technological features.

One target teacher is a second grade teacher. She has a master's degree with a reading specialization and prides herself on work with gifted and talented. She speaks of her part in the Project with a sense of certainty and control.

This teacher gears her lessons to the varying abilities of her children. She employs three separate groups during reading class. Other students spend the time doing work on work-book pages or tailored assignments. She stresses the need for fundamentals adopting a traditional approach in class. Phonetics is given ample attention in her teaching of second graders. Yet she reports on the changes that have occurred in her teaching, illustrating that with evidence of the amount of time spent covering each page of the text pointing out topics covered therein and asking students about their prior knowledge. Her upper group also deals with inferencing.

She considers the Project implementation to be a refinement of her professional style. Certified in reading methods different than the wholistic approach as such, she tailors the Project to her own expertise, emphasizing that which works with her children. As she says, many of the strategies of the new approach were always included in the introductory passages of the literary selection. However, the new approach gives added emphasis to certain factors and strategies. Taking cognizance of her children's limits, she feels that the explicitation of concepts would be beyond their second grade grasp, but repeated performance of the tasks and strategies will serve them well towards growth in comprehension.

The classroom style of this teacher is energetic and forceful. She has a commanding, caring presence. She was articulate, assertive and very well organized. The groups of students knew exactly where to go and what to do, executing rather complicated maneuvers around the classroom or between classrooms. Most of them worked at their desks or in reference areas of the room until given their chance in groups with the teacher.

The time spent in group with the teacher was busy. Nearly every student seemed eager to please and they seemed automatically aware of the terms the teacher set for them. The group sessions consisted of fast-paced staccato questions and answers that circled through the group. Immediate feedback reenforced each student for meeting expectations and they were continuously rewarded for participation and recitation.

The other target teacher teaches third grade language arts and reading and fourth grade math, science and social studies. She has taught nearly every grade from kindergarten through sixth grade including work with the gifted and talented. She speaks of her part in the Project with a modest sense of uncertainty but strong, enthusiastic conviction.

Generally she does not employ separate reading groups but gears the material to active participation in a variety of contexts from one-on-one, to small group projects of three to six, to lively group discussions. She stresses the need for child empowerment and some self-direction for third and fourth graders, adopting a facilitator type role much of the time. Finding innovative, suitable and ample resource materials is one of her major concerns. She reports on having changed her approach to reading very drastically with the start of this Project and the adoption of a wholistic reading approach, illustrating that with statements of not being sure of the outcome yet encouraged when students surprise her with renewed interest and vigor. She pointed to a desk showing how a slower student changed places just to be closer to the action.

She considers the Project implementation a revolution of her professional style saying that, although some of its components resemble things she had done previously, in the context of the whole strategic repertoire and underlying scheme, what she now is doing is altogether new. In trying to implement the Project, she relied greatly upon the principal and especially prized the principal's modeling of the strategies to her class. Her classroom reveals numerous components of the wholistic reading approach highlighted by bulletin board displays, postings of children's assignments, and signs bearing the concept names of several strategies. Her explicitation of the terminology of the strategies is both active and passive. She uses the explicit terms or asks students to state the name of what they are doing, which they do readily.

The classroom style of this teacher is laid-back and empowering. She is a facilitating, coaching kind of presence. She is resourceful, varied and always ready with a further project. Students complained approvingly when being taken from one task to another, openly voicing their pleasure at what they were doing and becoming very engaged in the sequence of tasks preliminary to the story to be read.

Overall, the Project is well served by the participating individuals at AES. They are efficient, committed professionals who have made sizeable investments of time and energy in efforts to attain the objectives of the Project. They do so not for the sake of the Project but for the sake of the children they care for and teach.

LEADERSHIP TEAM INTERACTION

Compared to other sites, a leadership team of two members dealing with two target teachers is small. The full complement elsewhere includes twice that many. At AES, the principal is also the reading specialist and the media specialist is a stand-in for the comparison teacher. In this case, this comparison teacher cannot serve as a control factor untouched by the innovation; she joined the Project as already a proponent of wholistic reading.

The principal recruited the Project participants with an eye toward eventual transformation of the staff instead of on the basis of accumulating all of the available wholistic expertise. The recruited teachers work in split classes and/or with lower grades. The one teacher who is the best instance of wholistic reading instruction is not a participant of the Project.

Some of the interaction of the leadership team and teachers has consisted of four-way communication. They went together to orientation meetings, had some team sessions, and participated in one or two teleconference calls. But much of their interaction was one-to-one, or principal with teachers without media specialist or principal with media specialist without teachers. The two teachers approach the Project from dramatically different points of view and methodology.

The team and target teachers viewed the Storylords and Teaching Reading Comprehension tapes together. By the March site visit, both teachers had the principal in to model two strategies and the second grade teacher had not had her in for any. The third/fourth grade teacher had viewed two episodes of Storylords with her class and the second grade teacher had viewed one.

It seems that the Project participants have not gelled into the form of strong consensus around the matter of implementing reading instruction. Divergence offsets common interaction. One teacher on the team said about the other: "I don't know what (she) is doing and she doesn't know what I am doing . . . and, about implementation (with the other faculty), I don't know what will happen next."

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

AES has operated from an explicit model for staff development before. It relies upon modeling. When one teacher uses techniques that other teachers might learn, they invite other teachers into their classroom to observe. The other teachers experiment and then discuss their progress with the modeling teacher and, perhaps, with the principal. For this Project, the principal is the chief modeler of the reading comprehension strategies. She wants this pattern of instruction-modeling-experimentation-feedback to characterize the staff development process.

The principal has held three half-hour in-service sessions on the wholistic reading strategies. She concentrated upon some of the research underlying the strategies and then upon putting them into practice.

Some teachers have begun to experiment with the strategies in early childhood or kindergarten with favorable results. The principal also sees some progress in what teachers are ordering for next year and what they are not ordering. Unit plans also reveal some differences.

One of the target teachers expressed the wish that other teachers would come into her class to observe but she has not found anyone to do so. Speaking informally with teachers other than the target teachers gives one the impression that this faculty-wide staff development is only in its beginning stages.

One instance does exist which reveals the kind of catalytic influence one colleague can have on another. The fifth grade teacher has been using the wholistic approach innovatively for five years. She studied the approach in two summer workshops. She has integrated the wholistic approach into reading and into science and wishes to extend it to social science. She abandoned reading workbooks four years ago. Her friendship with the media specialist has been an inspiration to the media specialist to experiment with wholistic methods. Even though the media specialist is participating in the Project and the fifth grade teacher is not, the fifth grade teacher has provided the media specialist with much incentive and feedback. The media specialist is abandoning workbooks for the first time next year.

CHANGE OVER TIME

This study is able to track something of development over time. There was a clear progression in the elements of implementing the Project that occurred between visits. The most conspicuous element to change was the level of confidence manifest by the empowering, facilitator type target teacher and by the media specialist. By the second site visit, both of these had decided not to order reading workbooks for next year.

The other notable change was that the technology was in place and operative, except for the teleconference call equipment. Even by the second site visit, however, the Project participant had not become comfortable with the apparatus. The length of time it took to be installed and made operative caused three of the participants to agree that it would have been far better and more effective to have had all the technology in place before the Project began.

The pace projected at the time of the first site visit for introducing further episodes of Storylords and for holding in-service sessions for the entire faculty had not been attained by the second site visit. A set of very important, extraneous demands hindered the principal/reading specialist from devoting as much time to it as she had planned during the early second semester.

STILL TO COME

No one at AES considers the Project fully implemented, but they know that what has been begun cannot be shelved; it is in the school to stay. They look forward to several things.

AES looks for more time to let the innovations sink in and work their way out. Further time to become familiar with the equipment is also looked for, although not as emphatically.

Use of the teleconferencing and computer bulletin board is just beginning. The additional resource materials and networking could contribute; being able to access and print materials from the "Reading Forum" will help in this way.

The principal looks foward to informal one-to-one meetings, at least monthly, to amplify strengths and remedy weaknesses in using wholistic reading. She also believes that the impetus of this Project could move the entire climate of the school in the direction of a more integrated, wholistic environment. Some of the younger teachers cautiously agree.

One decision very favorably related to by teachers wanting to implement the wholistic approach across curricular areas is the change from split-classes. As the teachers spend more time exclusively with the same group, their wholistic strategies are expected to be more broadly applied and more effective. This change will begin next fall.

In-service for the entire faculty will continue and intensify. The possibility exists of using one of the larger blocks of time, that of the morning all-faculty in-service time, for additional promotion and instruction related to Reading Improvement. Further interaction of the leadership team and target teachers might have the effect of intensifying the team feature of the Project. It is hoped that other teachers will take the opportunity to visit the classrooms of the target teachers to see the wholistic approach in action.

AES EVALUATES THE PROJECT

There are three things that everyone involved at AES agrees upon in evaluating the Project. The first is that Storylords is a marvelous resource that promotes the objectives of a wholistic reading approach clearly for various competency levels of the children. The second is that the Project has entailed hard work and much time, but neither the work nor the time are considered disproportionate to the intent or effects of the Project. The third is that AES views the Project design and implementation very favorably overall.

The regional orientation meetings met with mixed reviews; they contained so much information that the people less familiar with wholistic reading were overwhelmed. The materials sent were appreciated by the people who spent the most time with them.

Teaching Reading Comprehension met with the same mixed reviews. The segments were appreciated most when the teachers modeled material and were down-to-earth. The segments interviewing the experts met with less approval. On the other hand the nation-wide hook-up on ITFS consisting of an exchange with experts met with much approval and imparted the sense that AES was a part of a nation-wide project of great scope and importance.

The radio broadcasts do not get any positive mention. They seem to be the least valued component of the entire Project.

At times the problems with the technological apparatus made it seem as if the tail was wagging the dog. It required work and attention quite apart from the content of the Project. Any and all other deficiencies of the Project implementation cannot be evaluated adequately because the faulty delivery stymied the anticipated progression of events.

The scheduling of air-time broadcasting did not fit the schedule of AES. The school had to use prerecorded videos.

The dealings of the AES participants with Project coordinators went well. Project staff helped AES and AES personnel respected them. The media specialist found the Project coordinators' discrimination of reading content materials to be an important resource. The Principal had deep trust in the Project coordinators. She assessed their performance very favorably. She considers that the coordinators keep the Project outcomes clearly in mind and

that they are successfully building the structures to implement those outcomes as far as they are able. She asserts that the coordinators have what it takes to see the Project to its end. Feeling supported, encouraged and greatly assisted, the Principal values the personal characteristics of the Project coordinators and their flexibility in dealing with feedback.

WHAT AES RECOMMENDS

Recommendations from the AES faculty concern continuity, materials and software. At this point in time AES strongly feels that the Project is just beginning; only now are things in place and ready to be truly underway. What has been begun will be permanent, they feel, but needs assistance and time to mature and assume effective continuity.

More materials are needed that direct the faculty in their choice of texts that exemplify strategies. Much of the work in preparing to facilitate the children consists of the search for the appropriate materials. Availability of the correct stories and bibliography of stories and additional resources is needed.

The Project is urged as well to develop materials, including videos and other audio-visual aids, for the later grades. Fifth and sixth grades are not very well served with accessible materials. The development of materials suitable for fifth and sixth grades will become crucial as the Project and this wholistic approach take effect with children in the earlier grades.

Further assistance is also sought for generalizing the wholistic reading approach across various curricular areas and, at the same time, promoting the explicit wholistic climate for the entire school.

Some suggestions concerning software are the following: to increase access to the kind of interactive software that can direct faculty and children to the kind of stories that fit the objectives and student's competency. Along with access to more software is the request for continuing advice as to the best and the worst of that software to enable proper discrimination. Finally, as the Project was able to supply some of the more sophisticated hardware, a system of grants to enable financially-constrained districts to purchase the proper software is also recommended.

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTARY

Analysis and reporting of this case study have gone on in the larger context of the rural nature of the area, the school and the Project. Within that context, various themes have guided the selection and interpretation of materials. These themes concern technology, pedagogy and control or uncertainty.

As regards the context: rural is often defined as the absence of urban characteristics. Where that is the case, evaluation would occur as measured against a negative standard. Yet nearly two thirds of all school districts, half of all public schools and a third of classroom teachers are located in rural areas (De Young, 1987). Rural is viewed more properly as distinctive in and of itself. For this evaluation, the rural context is taken to mean characteristically small in population (1,000 to 5,000 with one or two town centers), occupied mainly in agriculture (at least 50% of the residents on family farms or agriculturally-linked services), economically marginal to the mainstream industrial economy (less than 10% of GNP), yet consisting of vigorous trade among its own constituents and suppliers, and having a pattern of social relationships that creates a common sense of identity (Hubel, 1988).

In behavioral terms, being rural can be taken to mean underexposed to the diversity of a teeming industrial nation and all of its technological, social and cultural offerings or it can mean less bombarded by density of population, urban disintegration, and immense segmentation of tasks and services. The emphasis inherent in viewing rural as distinctive in itself is to characterize rural residents as having continuity with kinship and tradition, somewhat homogeneous manifold of experience and a permeable or interconnected orientation to life events.

In terms of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project, characterization of the site and its people as rural sets a contrast between the sender and the receiver of the materials and delivery system; that is, between the Project coordinators and the elementary school. The value consideration relevant to that contrast stems from ascertaining on whose terms achievement of the objectives and implementation of the reading instruction and staff development proceed.

The implications of that consideration are highlighted in a critique of media promulgation, entitled "Naming the Game is the Name of the Game" (Goldsen, 1972). Since the receiver is to be changed by the process more than the sender, it is incumbent upon the site predominantly to set the terms of the actual transformation.

Three sets of criteria underlie the evaluation relevant to this value consideration. They are the following: technology as an end in itself or as a means to an end, pedagogy as specialized or wholistic and action premised on control or on uncertainty.

Technology can be considered as an end in itself or a means to an end. Technology gets to be an end in itself, for instance, when it is looked upon as a way to compete with city schools. If the rural is considered legitimate in its own right, the technology will contribute as a means to network and amplify rural resources by banding them together and allowing them to interact with larger domains instead of trying to "catch up" with technologically advanced urban centers.

The marginal character of agriculture and the earthy quality of the children's exposure can be viewed as a limitation or as a gift. If a school's pedagogy is highly specialized and diverse, the school will become as segmented as any diversified city. If some form of wholistic education characterizes the school's pedagogy and empowerment of the children's own gifts constitutes the climate, the more narrow, natural experiences and allegedly "under-exposed" quality of those experiences could be made much of, amplified within each student allowing her or him degrees of personal integration and a lessening of disruption which emulating urban life could never do.

When technology becomes an end in itself and specialization predominates, the likely outcome is high predictability and control. The other way around, if predictability and control become the desired outcomes, then increased technology for its own sake and increased specialization will be emphasized over rural networking and wholistic learning. A more suitable contemporary rural scenario would be the kind of organization or school in which uncertainty and the lack of tight control are valued as a spur to innovation and empowerment. The most adaptable form of organization is one that can blend tradition, expertise, and uncertainty (Wieck, 1979). Tradition sets a precedent and expertise gives a solution for knowing what to do next. But often--or, at least, sometimes--in very changing times, the best way to proceed is to say that we do not know what to do. In such cases, precedent and established solutions are in the way. Instead of prematurely seizing control over the unknown, the ability to dwell in uncertainty and to spend the time and effort to innovatively carve out a new path of action may contribute the most to suitable adaptation.

This case study of AES makes evident that all of the ingredients are in place for the proper use of technology as a means of rural networking, for a wholistic climate amplifying the children's rural experience, and for the innovation and empowerment that are occasioned by faculty and staff who are able to work with uncertainty.

To whatever extent the thrust of the school would turn away from finding worth in rural life and towards the direction of playing "catch-up" with the city, that emphasis would lessen available resources rather than amplifying them.

Greek mythology tells of Pegasus and of Icarus. Icarus was lost in a maze with his father, Daedalus, who fashioned artificial wings of wax allowing father and son to fly away. But, stretching the artificial specialty he had attained too far, Icarus flew near the sun which melted his wings bringing about his downfall. Pegasus on the other hand was integrally a winged creature and soared as one wholistically true to its nature. The rewards of that integral characteristic were to be always in the service of the Muses, the poetic and creative.

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Observations of the Rural Reading Improvement Program: Lake Holcombe Elementary School

Gordon Hoke

This paper is developed in a two-part format. Part I is chiefly concerned with *programattic* aspects, which I saw as the basic strength of the effort. Part II examines the realm of *staff development*, including its ties to *technology*. In Lake Holcombe, at least, this was the weaker dimension.

Part I. Program

1. Teachers and students were enthused about the approach, its materials, strategies and techniques. Qualitative and behavioral indicators were readily evident.

2. With the exception of an occasional mismatch between arrival of project materials and classroom sequence--a common problem in developmental efforts--programattic elements represented an unqualified success.

Part II. Staff Development/Technology

1. Comprehensive, sustained staff development must allow for organizational complexities at the local level. One illustration is concern for classroom continuity of instruction; project personnel face both localized demands for inservice training and pressures to participate in project-related conferences and workshops. A second illustration is found in a letter team leaders received about April 10 from a reading consultant to the project (note attachment). It presents a variety of time-consuming requests at a time when schools are beginning to "wind down" operations, when local administrators are confronted with a complex array of responsibilities.

2. Ancillary personnel, such as aides, also should be involved in staff development. Lake Holcombe has a truly outstanding aide in its Elementary Instructional Materials Center. She is superb: sensitive to and interested in children, knowledgeable about instructional technology, bright and keenly observant, a real asset for this initiative and for the school.

3. In my judgment, team leaders should be engaged in a summer workshop marked by the following characteristics:

   3.1 focused solely on them as supervisors/leaders;

   3.2 in-depth participation in technology-based activities and peer coaching. They need to become genuine "experts" with respect to project elements, to be recognized as informed leaders.

   3.3 the concept of networking should be fully explored, given operational meaning.

4. Technology

   4.1 Passivity seems to dominate the linkage of technology to staff development. Two points for consideration.

      A. Encourage the viewing of training tapes as an interactive process; demonstrate how it can be accomplished. Critically review all training tapes to ascertain whether they are now congruent with expectations and purposes.

      B. Teleconferencing is an art in itself, presenting different types of demands than does use of on-site instructional media. Everyone engaged in the act of teleconferencing needs to understand its purpose, its goals (for the session), to feel comfortable with it.

   4.2 A communication from Madison to Bruce, November 19, indicated that project sites should "plan on accessing the bulletin board at a minimum of twice per week." Judging by transactions in Lake Holcombe, time constraints, competition for access, and uncertainty about handling this equipment make that recommendation virtually impossible to acknowledge. (The new Educational Service Centers in Illinois also are having difficulty with their version of an electronic bulletin board.)

Summary

Program elements should be even stronger next year, especially with crucial materials on hand from the opening of school.

Staff development requires much thought and attention, in part because it is central to expansion of the program. And its reliance on distance-education technology adds complexities that should be carefully and thoroughly addressed.

CASE STUDY AS STORY-TELLING

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Case Study as Story-Telling

Introduction

Parameters

Denny (1978) provided a pertinent description for our purposes. He wrote:

> Story-telling is unlikely to help in the creation or evaluation of educational remedies, but can facilitate problem definition. Problem definition compared to problem solution is an underdeveloped field in education.

A few years earlier (1976), Martin Rein submitted that "the giving of advice and the design of social programmes is like the telling of relevant stories."

The parameters of problem definition and program design struck this observer as appropriate guidelines for developing the "Lake Holcombe Story." It is a tale essentially told by the faculty, support staff, administration, and students of the school.

Boundaries

In a paper released after his death, James Macdonald declared (1986):

> The boundaries of curriculums are, I suggest, the boundaries of the school systems. . . . Curriculum plans, materials, personnel, and pressures may come from outside these boundaries but *the boundary of a curriculum is identifiable by the activity of those people who structure and utilize the outside data in the activity of the school system*. (italics added)

Other scholars, however, have warned that efforts involving the crossing of boundaries present demanding sets of issues. For example, a quarter-century ago (1964) Robert Morriss reported:

> Much of our discussion has dealt with the question of boundaries. I think of this as a problem with boundaries of influence and boundaries of integration. The more we focus on the (problem), the more we have to deal with institutions that are concerned with (other problems). And this is a sharp problem from the point of view of boundary maintenance in *professional role performance*. The more we focus on the community or the subcommunity group, the more we get to other boundary levels. (italics added)

A more recent statement (1982) extended Morriss's analysis.

> Increasingly many of the problems we need to confront lie at the boundary between a system and key variables in its environment. We will definitely need to devote more attention to problems which exist at the boundaries. (italics added)

The material to follow highlights efforts made by the groups noted above to honor Macdonald's credo within the context outlined by the brief discussion of boundaries.

Methodology

Definition of the "Case"

This paper borrows from the work of two British scholars (1974) who defined case study as "the way of the artist, who . . . through the portrayal of a single instance locked in time and circumstance, communicates enduring truth about the human condition." The "instance" represents a compressed span of one year, 1987-1988, in the life of a tiny rural elementary school located in northwestern Wisconsin, with project time, effort, and resources actually limited to a narrow spectrum of the institution. The "circumstance" is marked by the attempts of two state agencies, the Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks, to lend technical assistance in the cause of reading improvement. Figure 1 presents key components of this attempt.

Social Process

The British writers stressed that the most vital feature of case study "is that it is pursued via social process and leads to a social product." Their words were acknowledged recently by another European author who suggested (1987) how the search for "enduring truth," and the communication of it, might be enhanced.

> There seems a need to restore our narrative competence, our dialogical competence, a need to have very concrete depiction of a story, the describing of an event as close to our observations as we can get it as the basis of dialogue.
>
> * * *
>
> Lest the client (respondent) be overrun by the 'expert' descriptions, we should see to it that the ability of observing, describing and reflecting is developed with the client. And this is difficult.

Figure 1

Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project

Overview

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project uses a variety of telecommunications ("distance") technologies to deliver staff development to the participating schools, as well as to link them with the project staff and with each other. The goal is to help educators learn and use a new concept in reading instruction—the teaching of reading as thinking, as described in the 1986 DPI *Guide to Curriculum Planning in Reading.*

Project Goals

The goals of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project are:

- To improve reading programs, specifically, the teaching of reading as thinking, in small, rural schools through a research-based, technologically supported staff development model.
- To demonstrate a viable way to deliver the components of such a staff development program, using a variety of telecommunications technologies.

Technologies and Funding

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project has funded some of the equipment needed and costs incurred by the school districts to make use of the following telecommunications technologies:

BROADCAST TELEVISION

Delivers two video series produced by and broadcast on the Wisconsin Public Television Network directly to the classroom or for taping and playback at a later time:

"Storylords"—reading comprehension strategies for elementary-grade students

"Teaching Reading Comprehension"—in-service credit course that introduces teachers to the new reading instruction techniques

- *District provides color television and VHS video tape recorder*

NARROWCAST TELEVISION

Delivers live and taped in-service programs for staff development using an existing video delivery system available to some districts and the newer Wisconsin Narrowcast Service, available to others

- *Project provides dish and cable for a narrowcast television system, which uses the ITFS microwave television frequencies allocated for instructional use, located in five of the participating districts*

NARROWCAST RADIO

Delivers live in-service programs for staff development via the state School Radio Service, a closed-circuit audio system "piggybacked" on the Wisconsin Public Radio FM signal

- *Project provides SCA (narrowcast radio) receivers*
- *District provides FM radio antenna and audio tape recorder*

COMPUTER NETWORK

Facilitates project-wide sharing of information, linking participating school districts and project staff through the "Learning Link, Wisconsin" software programs for computerized, electronic mail and forums (bulletin boards)

- *Project provides computer modems and cables, electronic mail software, long-distance telephone costs, and systems operator for electronic bulletin board*
- *District provides computer with duo disk drive and printer and direct-access phone line for computer modem*

TELEPHONE

Enables small-group interaction for staff development activities, including follow-up of narrowcast radio and television programming, using the convener conferencing technology of Wisline, telephone conferencing service of the University of Wisconsin–Extension

- *Project provides microphones, speakers, and long-distance costs*
- *District provides direct-access phone line*

Figure 2

MEMO

TO: Several People at Lake Holcombe Schools

FROM: Gordon Hoke

DATE: January 6, 1988

RE: A set of recommendations for future transactions concerning the Reading Project.

1. Thanks to the generous cooperation received from all personnel in the school. I believe we have established the following baselines:

   1.1 Context— The school as a truly special environment; the elementary section as a subset of that environment.

   1.2 Technology— A meeting of site-assessment personnel scheduled for January 22 should clarify some of the issues here. In my judgment, Lake Holcombe schools are at a higher level of "readiness" for effective use of technology than would be the case, for example, of most rural sites in Illinois.

2. I believe it will be possible to collect information on items 1.1 and 1.2 during the routine course of work on-site. Future concentration probably should be devoted to Program issues—i.e., to the classes of Juli Maciosek and Vicky Brandstatter. To the extent that my presence does not interfere with the teaching/learning process, I'd like to focus attention on those classes during the next two visits. The latter are scheduled for the following dates:

   2.1 February 9-10

   2.2 April 12-13

3. The third visit will occur on May 10-11. Prior to those dates, you will receive copies of a first draft of the study. This (last) visit will be used to obtain your critiques of that document.

Best wishes.

His advice was honored in four basic ways. First was the use of "self-evaluation portfolios," as described by Stake and Scheyer (1975).

> The key idea is to establish a file or collection of records and materials which broadly represent the program. This portfolio should be a loose collection so that parts of it can be rearranged and differently displayed from time to time. The entries should reflect the program activities, its issues, its valuings, and its compromises.

Abridged versions of the Stake-Scheyer document were prepared for Lake Holcombe respondents and mailed to them prior to the observer's arrival. Students were engaged by discussing the concept with them. School personnel (3)—two project teachers and head of leadership team—involved with portfolios were debriefed twice: in mid-February and mid-April, 1988, as were students.

Second, the on-site "partner evaluator" was encouraged to play an extremely active role. In addition to maintaining a portfolio as team leader, she prepared the statement which serves as a "postscript" for the study.

Third, a communication system was established with respondents effective with the observer's initial visit: December 8-9, 1987. Figure 1 is an illustration; it was accompanied by a personal letter. Similar actions followed on the heels of subsequent visits: February 9-10, April 12-13, and May 10-11, 1988.

Fourth, copies of the first draft of the study were mailed to respondents in late April (see Figure 2); their critiques were obtained during the last visit in mid-May. Those judgments and questions are incorporated into this final paper.

Lake Holcombe Stories

The following accounts are arranged on a time sequence—i.e., stories are tied to dates of each site visit. Reactions of Lake Holcombe respondents to the initial draft of this paper are featured May 10-11, 1988 (see Figure 3).

December 8-9, 1987

Mary Salo—(Assistant principal with responsibility for the elementary school, grades K-8. Also team leader for the project, and serving as "partner-evaluator." Minnesota native and graduate of Winona State University. She has been in Lake Holcombe three years.)

> I like the basic plan but project representatives have a very tight idea of what this project really is; in fact, they have different perceptions of what it is—hope they let us know.
>
> There is not centrally-directed staff development: it's up to the school and the (local) project director. And we still don't have all the technology. I think the phone modem is coming soon, and our radio reception should improve when the new wiring is completed in the IMC.

Juli Maciosek—(Third grade teacher in project. A graduate of University of Wisconsin-Superior in her first year of teaching. Believes her preparation for reading instruction was "excellent.")

and

Vicky Brandstatter—(Fourth grade project teacher. Is in 11th year at Lake Holcombe; spent three years earlier in Stanley, Wisconsin schools. Also works for Mary Kay Corporation and is much impressed by training opportunities provided by that organization.)

Throughout this study, the observer worked with these two instructors in tandem as well as individually.

> (We) didn't think much of our first (project) meeting; so little time—40 minutes—was given to it. (We're) still uncertain about the core of this project and the technology hasn't arrived yet—just got the tapes and have had one showing of Storylords. Mary doesn't know about the technology, either, and she's the key person.

Arrangements were also completed regarding the portfolios; before the visit ended, the observer briefly visited both classrooms, discussing his work with students.

Carol Shimel—(Fifth grade instructor, not engaged in the project. Returned to the classroom after "time-out" for raising children. Began higher education in Wisconsin's version of two-year "Normal Schools," where she received "an excellent, clinical-based introduction to teaching.")

She and the observer crossed paths in the computer laboratory. (Lake Holcombe is a K-12 building, with the elementary section much the older part; but each section has its own computer room and its own library-IMC. Computers, VCRs, and TV monitors are also scattered among classrooms.)

> I'm a computer advocate, self-taught. I helped establish our software library, and we've made a deliberate attempt to maximize the impact on faculty and students.

Alice Troupe— (Aide in elementary library-IMC. Interested in and knowledgeable about instructional technology. Has been in present position 20 years.)

Figure 3

TO: Several People at Lake Holcombe Schools

FROM: Gordon Hoke

DATE: April 15, 1988

RE: The attached draft of case study report for Lake Holcombe.

1. This material is literally a "rough draft." The final version will be marked by the following characteristics:

   1.1 It will acknowledge your reactions to (this) original document. Please see last paragraph, page 3.

   1.2 Some parts may have to be revised following discussions with each of you, May 10-11.

   1.3 It will be prepared by a printing firm.

2. Pages that are likely to be of most interest to you on an individual basis are indicated below.

Is that new FM antennae part of (your) project? Before we weren't getting anything; now O.K., although still a little background noise.

One of the things about using technology—everything has to fall in place, and that makes the difference in high school and elementary organization very critical.

Gayle Kirkman— (A reading instructor who shares husband's interest in and experience with educational technology. Believes latter, especially visual media, is crucial for enhancing school programs in rural settings.)

Time and weather constraints are very severe; rural sites desperately need school-based delivery. We also need more VCRs and a satellite dish. Cable is not likely to come here, but we must do something to provide more program options for the kids.

Staff development also has to be improved, to operate on a broader base, and that may require some version of an extended year. Are schools ready for all this?

Thus far expectations (for project) are not being fulfilled: we want something to come out of this!

Donovan Lapp— (Has been in Lake Holcombe system for 20 years; last five as assistant administrator and high school principal. Expresses concern about economic conditions affecting many families in the district: "problem is not increasing, but is crossing generations.")

I'm listed on the leadership team as a 'media specialist,' but I'm really not. I see my role as helping others actively committed to the project.

Denis Kirkman—(In second year as chief administrator of Lake Holcombe Schools, is a strong and experienced advocate of technology in education, but is concerned about linking its use to staff development while maintaining continuity of classroom instruction. Sees public education as "under the gun.")

What happened to the technology?

We want a diffused impact from our participation. We have a good core team; its already been praised by the DPI (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction). Need that technology, because it is vital for any type of external networking.

February 9-10, 1988

Mary Salo

Teleconferencing equipment arrived last week and the computer bulletin board is here now.

I'm screening (project) materials for Vicky and Juli, and 'saving' some of it for them to read on a day like today (a planning day for them). We don't want to bother them too much; sometimes the project acts as if it's the most important thing for us to do. It has demanded more time and work than anticipated. There's little understanding of how people in rural schools are stretched to the limit, the multiple roles everyone has to play.

We could be taking a day off per week for the project. 'Subs' are not the issue; we (she also teaches in the domain of 'learning disabilities') need to be in there teaching the kids. Last week I made one of my observations of Juli while she was teaching a project lesson, so we saved some time and learned a little more about the project, too.

(Her portfolio: contents principally representing project materials.)

Yes, the original set of guidelines was helpful, provided a structure. For example, there's a recent update on the Learning Link Bulletin Board, only now I'll have to show Vicky and Juli how to access it, and that takes time for all of us.

We've not been able to develop inservice on a broad basis. That was an original purpose, but we haven't heard anything more from the project level. I don't feel comfortable in carrying out such a role at this point.

Juli Maciosek and Vicky Brandstatter

Vicky and Juli on a project "planning day." Observer spends morning with them in the high school library-IMC, first viewing two inservice training tapes. Vicky begins the discussion.

I subbed for Mary on a 'teleconferencing' call yesterday and enjoyed it. If we had known all that beforehand, we would have had a different perception and understanding of this project. At least I wouldn't have felt so 'alone'—sharing of ideas is so helpful.

We still have so much to read; somehow, I guess, we are supposed to see lots of connections, relationships to our daily work. In any case, I'm looking forward to next year when we'll all have better plans.

(Juli) One thing that needs planning is how students from my class will be combined with the other third graders who haven't had this reading program.

(Vicky) Yes, and we should think about the 'spill-over' I'm seeing in science and social studies. We never studied how to teach reading in college; most of our time was spent reviewing reading programs.

(Juli) My preparation was excellent; we weren't taught to rely on workbooks and manuals, so I don't.

(Vicky) Yes, but we're 20 years apart. Can't believe I'm part of this program; technology scares me to death.

(Juli) I came to Lake Holcombe because of its emphasis on computers; deliberately took a 'concentration' in computers at Superior.

(Vicky) I wouldn't use (these) tapes as the basis for an inservice training program.

(Juli) I agree. If we could see an actual demonstration now and then, it would help relieve the passivity, the boredom.

(Vicky) Of course I don't know what the other choices (for staff development) are, but the tapes do give me a good background of information, help me understand the strategy.

(Juli) I'll have to show you something I've done in revising our project teacher's guide to make it more in line with the sequence of lessons on the tapes.

(Juli—her portfolio.)

I'm still not really involved with the technology. What I have here are samples of students' work as related to Storylords. I chose the best illustrations of the strategy we are using in class, but I want at least one sampling from each student before we're through—not just the 'best' students, the whole class.

My term for 'Story Mapping' is 'Story Grammar': The kids know it by the latter although they recognize 'mapping' too. I modify a great deal, always before students see material; otherwise you get 19 different opinions. Some 'Think and Search' tasks are not valid; only if the child has to obtain answers by thinking, by drawing upon inferences or clues. That example (points to booklet) does not represent 'Think and Search.'

I emphasize inferencing skills. It's the most difficult type of answer for them to give, but if they can handle inferencing, they can handle a 'right there' question.

(On the wall in her room is a poster marked by the following elements:
What is in my head and What is on the page = Inference)
(frontal sketch of child's face and head) (sketch of a bookcover with title)

Writing drives their work. Kids have liked Storylords and the activities tied to it. However, I'd like to see better ways of evaluating, at beginning and end of the year, after strategies have supposedly been learned.

(Vicky—her portfolio.)

"I chose items that struck me for a variety of reasons, so I have a collection of things. I told Mary at start of year that if it fits, I'll use it (project material), but won't bring in lots of nonrelevant material.

These illustrations come from attempts to debrief students; sometimes I employ a form of brainstorming. We use large sheets of paper, tape them to the board, the kids engage in a form of 'notetaking,' and writing their responses on the sheets. Other classes wander over during the day, discuss the sheets with my kids. On occasion, they'll run over into recess. I'm seeing more interest, and at higher levels; more participation, too. Also, the transition from assigned (group) reading to independent reading seems to be another beneficial outcome.

> I was gone the day following a class-viewing of a Storylords tape. Left instructions for the sub to have them draw a 'wordless story.' Matt's story (about football) appears complex, but the kids understand it easily by using 'mapping' techniques to read it. Because the class is divided into two reading groups, with me taking the slower group, we try for different approaches, combining pictures, development of inferencing, moving from small, specific examples to larger-scale illustrations.

Also appearing in Vicky's portfolio was a statement titled "Reading—12/87." An excerpt follows:

> I had previously told them (her reading group) we were part of an experiment, so we were an experimental group. People would be coming to watch us, and we would 'spread' the skills we learned in our special reading group to our whole homeroom class. . . .This group thought that was pretty neat—they were going to 'teach' those other kids something! . . .I have noticed a definite lift in their self-concept when we introduce the new skill to the homeroom class, especially science and social studies classes.

Group discussion with Juli's class regarding the "best thing" about reading/language class, Storylords, videotapes, etc.

> Overall, great attention to structural components of material—e.g., references to mapping, inferencing, prior knowledge, and the like. (Vicky made similar references in her portfolio.) Male student praises videotapes as "good way" to learn. When asked, "Why?" he says: "You can learn from them even if you have trouble with reading."
>
> Class members are asked to keep something tangible—a piece of writing, a drawing, a lesson from their book—which they can discuss with the observer in April.
>
> (Two students in Vicky's reading group who are beginning portfolios.)

June

> I like Storylords the best because of its puzzles, trying to 'guess' what it is. (Responds to query.) At home, I use 'Find the Words.' And I work with puzzles when we go to the IMC.

Andy

> Storylords makes learning fun, not so hard. School is better this year because we are doing more things in reading class: Mrs. Brandstatter teaches us so good (sic). We get to work now and don't forget (referring to structural components of reading program).

A similar request was made of them to keep something for the next session in mid-April.

Carol Shimel

Don't feel like it's too late to learn anything, not just technology. I see lots of old ideas surfacing in 'new' language. For example, much of what Madeline Hunter is pushing was commonplace during my first college days. We were into clinical training immediately!

Our training for the teaching of reading was murder! We had three sessions a day, with a different type of grouping on each occasion. Our supervisor was tough and demanding; gave you feedback 'on the spot.' They taught you to survive in a classroom.

One of toughest jobs when I came back was to get children to read. Technology helps answer the search for ways to help kids learn: videotapes can make my point, particularly in a historical sense, better than I can. Motivation has become so important; we must seek new ways of teaching. I stress listening skills; often play 'mind games' with them as a check. Kids can contribute much, learn more, by teaching each other. A great way to learn is by teaching something to someone else.

Alice Troupe

"You'll always need backup elements (of technology). Lots of 'wear and tear'—moving it around, different users. We've used some teachers' rooms as storage, but not all teachers want to get involved that way. Our VCRs take much pressure; we have three different types, none completely compatible with another, and I have to relearn each time we get a new one.

(She asks) Do you think there's any way technology can help with all these 'special' classes?

Gayle Kirkman

Most of the technology is here now. The school is getting a 'dish' for down-link capability. It will be placed on roof of high school. The side-band radio is finally working, and we're taping programs off it; reception seems to be O.K.

Our need to develop program options is growing, especially in math. Visual media are so important today.

Denis Kirkman

Schools are really coming 'under the gun.' If we don't respond to changing demands, some type of voucher system is likely to appear. I'm much concerned about staff development—how to do it in such a small school—because we must protect the classroom.

April 12-13, 1988

Mary Salo

We're having trouble with the electronic bulletin board. It takes too much time—often 30 minutes—to get underway. For me, the down-loading

Figure 4

Program 9 Activity Sheet

NAME ______________________________

DIRECTIONS: Think about a story idea. Use your pencil to write ideas about each story part. Use the map to help you write your story.

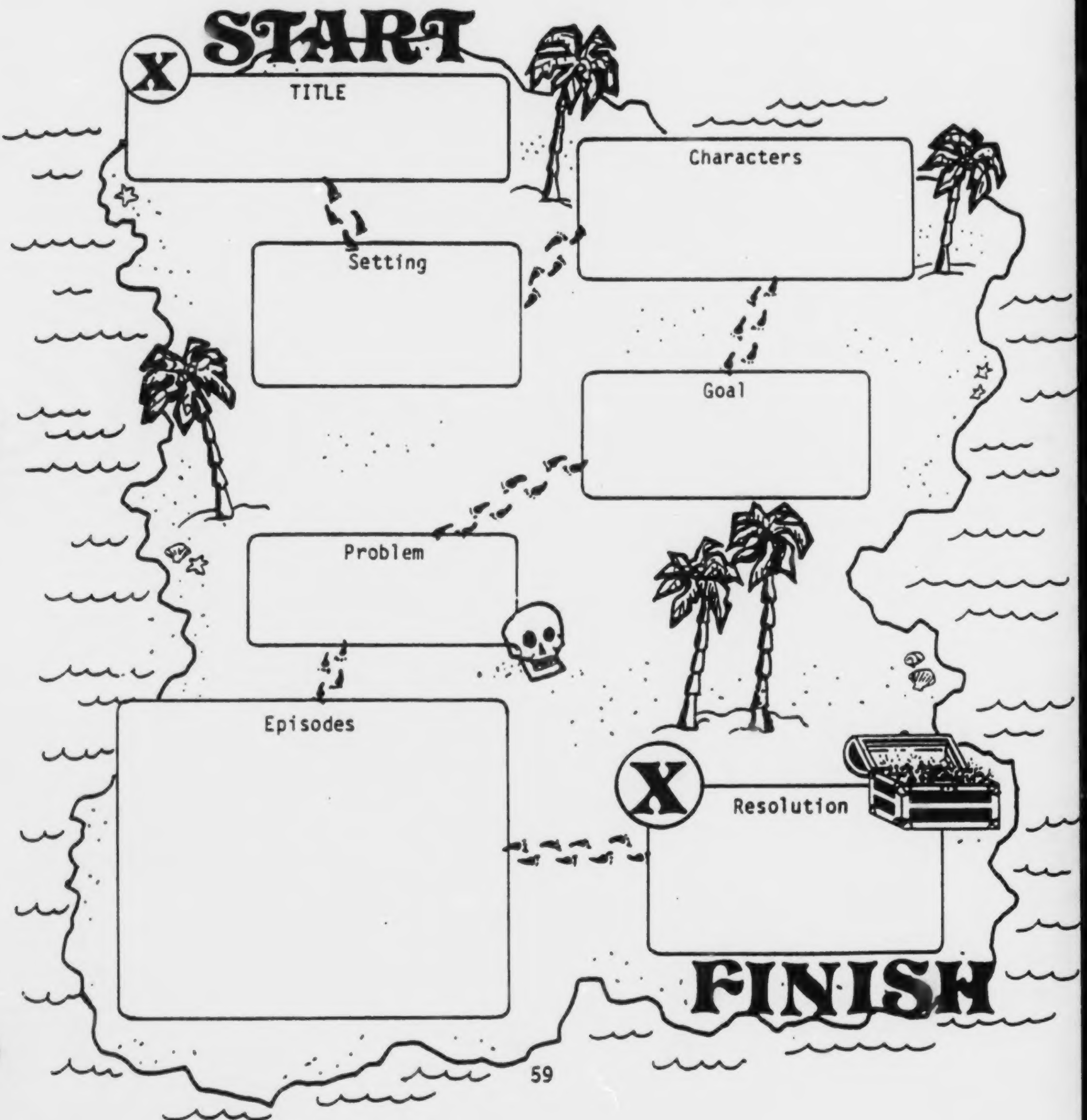
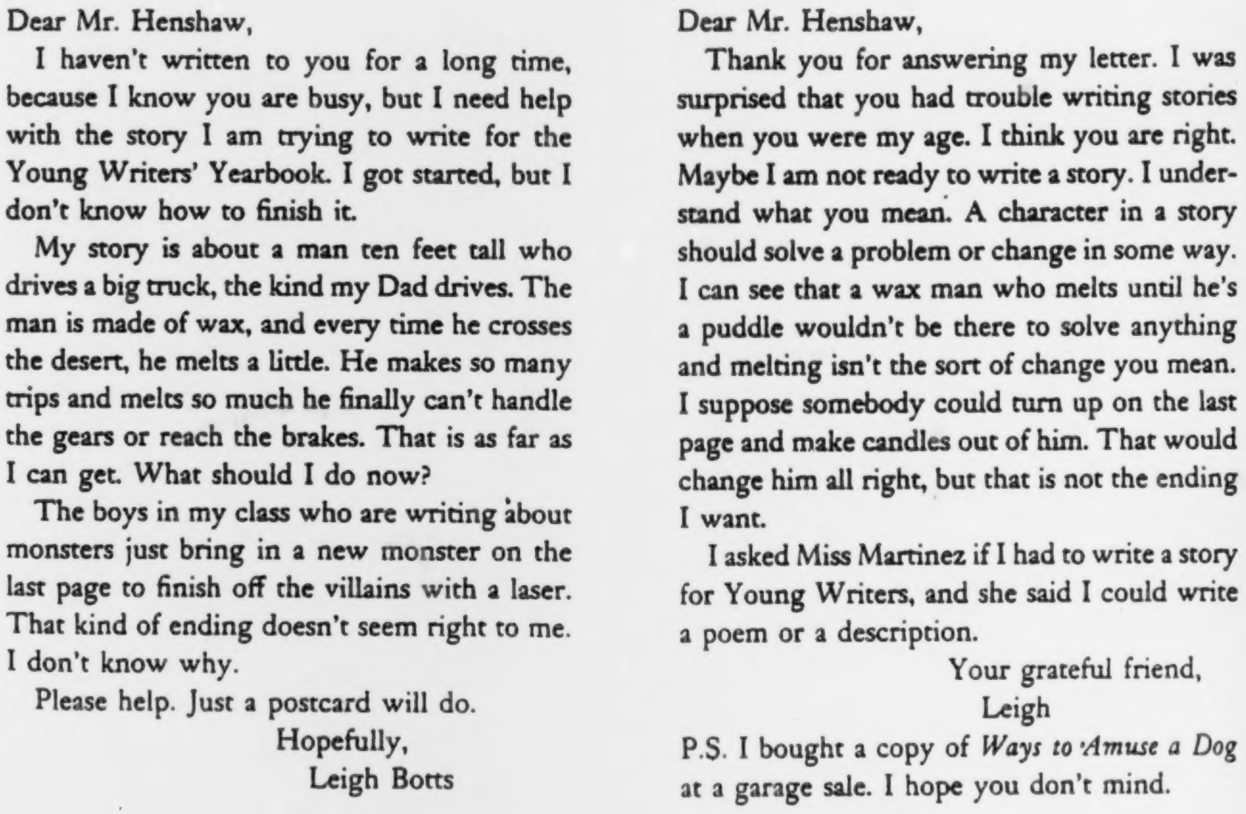

X
START
TITLE
Characters
Setting
Goal
Problem
Episodes
X
Resolution
FINISH

Figure 5 *



Dear Mr. Henshaw,

I haven't written to you for a long time, because I know you are busy, but I need help with the story I am trying to write for the Young Writers' Yearbook. I got started, but I don't know how to finish it.

My story is about a man ten feet tall who drives a big truck, the kind my Dad drives. The man is made of wax, and every time he crosses the desert, he melts a little. He makes so many trips and melts so much he finally can't handle the gears or reach the brakes. That is as far as I can get. What should I do now?

The boys in my class who are writing about monsters just bring in a new monster on the last page to finish off the villains with a laser. That kind of ending doesn't seem right to me. I don't know why.

Please help. Just a postcard will do.

Hopefully,
Leigh Botts

Dear Mr. Henshaw,

Thank you for answering my letter. I was surprised that you had trouble writing stories when you were my age. I think you are right. Maybe I am not ready to write a story. I understand what you mean. A character in a story should solve a problem or change in some way. I can see that a wax man who melts until he's a puddle wouldn't be there to solve anything and melting isn't the sort of change you mean. I suppose somebody could turn up on the last page and make candles out of him. That would change him all right, but that is not the ending I want.

I asked Miss Martinez if I had to write a story for Young Writers, and she said I could write a poem or a description.

Your grateful friend,
Leigh

P.S. I bought a copy of *Ways to Amuse a Dog* at a garage sale. I hope you don't mind.

---

*Beverly Cleary. Dear Mr. Henshaw. New York, New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1983, pp. 89 & 91.

Figure 6

8 Reading Comprehension

One day Mike and Joan Robinson were playing ball near their apartment. On the way home they found a wallet on the sidewalk. Joan picked it up, and they brought it to their father.

"Someone lost a wallet," Joan explained.

"And we found it," added Mike.

Mr. Robinson opened the wallet. He found a card with the name Rosalie Gomez and a five-dollar bill.

"Five dollars!" cried Joan. "We could buy lots of things with that much money."

"Lots of comic books," said Mike.

"Or a new bat," said Joan.

Then Mike looked at Joan and his father.

"I don't think we should spend the money," Mike said. "It doesn't belong to us."

His father nodded and Joan smiled.

21. Where did Mike and Joan find the wallet?

○ At the store
○ In the apartment
○ At the ball park
○ On the sidewalk

22. What will Mike and Joan probably do with the money?

○ Buy a new baseball bat
○ Ask their father to keep it
○ Buy lots of comic books
○ Return it to its owner

23. How did Mr. Robinson probably feel about his children at the end of this story?

○ Angry
○ Proud
○ Worried
○ Sad

24. Which of the following happened first in the story?

○ Mike and Joan found a wallet.
○ Mike and Joan thought of things to buy.
○ Mike and Joan went to find their father.
○ Mike and Joan played ball.

25. What could you probably say about the Robinson family?

○ They are honest.
○ They often find things.
○ They always agree.
○ They are selfish.

26. What is the main idea of this story?

○ Two children wanted to find out who lost the wallet that they found.
○ Two children found a wallet and had to decide what to do with it.
○ Two children needed more money for the things they wanted to buy.
○ Two children planned how they would spend some money they'd found.

techniques are very difficult to master. A consultant has come by, but he didn't actually work with it in an operational sense. Disks may be the problem, because these are copies of the originals, not new disks.

Next year we need to get other rooms involved, especially other third and fourth grade classes, and we need to move now with plans for picking up second graders. But we need information from the project level about next year.

(Her portfolio: refers to episodes supporting remarks above.)

Was going to show Juli how to use bulletin board, but unable to get through--3:15 p.m. is a bad time. I've heard this from others, too. Best time is during the day. I suspect 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. would also be a bad time.

Received packets of information on 'Inferencing' and 'Mapping.' Juli and Vicky also received them. Would have been better to receive them sooner. Juli and Vicky were done with Inferencing when packet arrived and have already introduced Storymapping—they may have already covered this strategy.

Juli

I'm not hearing much about the project. Mary said something about Cornell (another field site in close proximity) being on TV.

Mary and I have tried to work with the electronic bulletin board. After school, first, which is a very busy period. Then we tried during one of my 'prep' periods, but it wasn't functioning because of an error in the program. Other times we've tried, line has been busy.

I'd like to improve use of Storylords—flow of materials, though, is falling behind right time for class presentation. Materials are very helpful, but too late to be of greatest help. Next year I can make better use of them, will approach them as a new resource.

This class is a 'special' group. Even the slower children are responding well. One girl, so shy and passive earlier, is much more interested now, is engaged in class activities. It's great to see that change. I believe her behavior has been prompted by involvement with Story Grammar. It helps kids make better use of workbooks, too, and reinforces their work in science and social studies.

(Her portfolio: mainly consists of copies of student work.)

I tell them that workbooks aren't that important. We'll have more time for other activities, including Storylords, which they love.

Have had students tell stories aloud by simply employing parts that 'fit' the Story Grammar framework. Good results, because the focus of their stories is on important elements (see Figure 4 for example of framework).

We also do a great deal of 'partner-reading.' Not so much aloud; and sometimes I tell them to look for parts that fit the Story Grammar approach or ask them to read three pages, stop, make prediction of outcome, tell partner. We emphasize thinking, to be thoughtful; looking for clues, for inferences, drawing upon prior knowledge.

This page from 'Henshaw' just fits what we're trying to do. Some kids take that book to heart. (Figure 5 consists of the pages to which Juli was referring.)

I search magazines a lot to find ideas. Highlights—for me—is a good source. This Paris workbook (Scott G. Paris, Reading and Thinking Strategies) is very helpful. It emphasizes thinking and has good, illustrative posters with it. Vicky and I share this kit and we both like it very much.

You know, this test (shows booklet) amazes me! We work so much on the basic parts of the project. Then we get to these tests on reading comprehension and there is nothing in the (SRA) test that relates to our work in class. (See Figure 6 for copy of test exercise in question.) Students are simply asked to respond, not to employ ideas they've learned. What can I do?

Vicky

We have so many children for whom education is only second to other needs.

I ask if they (other teachers who work with her class) see uses of the process when I'm not around, and I check to see if the kids are using it when I'm not around.

Hate to see the project end; I've enjoyed it. Will begin immediately next fall with the materials.

Heard on teleconferencing call—I was subbing for Mary—that project might be refunded. Also heard that New Auburn (another site) is rewriting its curriculum to incorporate these strategies. I said (during call): 'It certainly has changed my teaching.'

I'm feeling more at ease, planning better with the materials. Think I have integrated them into my normal working routines. Now and then I check with Juli if something doesn't make sense. Future plans for inservice should deal more with key vocabulary and terminology. Not sure about the technology, but I understand we're still having trouble with it, especially the bulletin board. We do need to continue, though. If only one year, what good is it?

I originally agreed to participate on a 'trial' basis. Response of the kids to it 'sold me.' But you need to clearly understand what it's trying to do.

(Her portfolio: her reflections about the project materials, purpose, etc.)

Seeing myself as more selective in choosing strategies and techniques. Kids have been so accustomed to using workbooks, going from page to page, that when we 'skip' pages, they become concerned, and I have to help them make that transition.

Storymapping continues to be one of their favorite activities—that's a good sign, because we need to do more on reading as a thinking process, separate from the topic. Not always teaching reading classes but reading as a process. If you're not careful, you'll say something like 'Let's put the reading away, move to social studies.' It's important to help kids understand these relationships—and you're often fighting an uphill battle. They don't feel comfortable using 'prior knowledge' that isn't in the book, in the story. You have to reassure them, encourage.

(The two students in Vicky's classes and their portfolios.)

June

I forgot mine—it's at home. But I think it was on Story Grammar. I use it (the strategy) when I read books and stuff.

I always keep my puzzle book in a special place—think it's in top drawer of my chest at home, and that's where the other thing is. It helps me learn new words.

(In response to a question): The best thing about school is the library and reading—and music. (Librarian: "Yes, June likes books, shows it when she's in here.") (Music instructor: "Yes, a lovely child—is responsive, tries hard, a pleasure to have in here.")

Andy

This is our Story Map (note Figure 4 for illustration). It helps you figure out things, it helps me get my grades up. It helps me understand what I'm doing.

In third grade we had something like it, but it had more clues, not so much of Story Map.

Reading is getting better every time, every week. We are learning what those words (inferencing, prior knowledge, comprehension) mean. I'm having the best year ever in school.

(Earlier in the day, Vicky commented about Andy's progress. "He is doing well, probably sees applications most readily in social studies; he's most interested in that area.")

Carol Shimel

We're always fighting time and staff limitations, and broader use of technology aggravates that problem. You can't turn the kids loose and walk away.

It gets easier, though. First year was mind-boggling; and technology is 'new' all the time if you try different approaches, pursue different goals—for example, the move to wordprocessing. Some routines don't work every year because students change more than people think. In my opinion, computers haven't made life easier, they have complicated things an awful lot.

Scheduling, too, gets more complicated. There's the availability of software, the sharing of rooms with other people. And if you move away from the lab to installing computers in the classroom, it becomes almost impossible to function because of so many different levels of student competence.

If I have an equipment problem, I go to Ted Ash in the high school. If it's software, try to pick up on new developments by attending workshops and conferences—talk to other teachers about 'What works?' I'm also still taking a formal course now and then, and really benefited from a day spent at Cray Research recently.

Students are as limited as we are as teachers. If only I could learn more, faster. If only schools could provide more time to teachers during the day, but, then, some of us would waste it.

If I had a student available to help—sort of a student-colleague, learning together. Learn from my son as home when he comes down from Madison.

But somehow schools are going to have to be more responsive to changing population trends, to what is going to be the role of the school in the future, with all those changes plus the technology.

Alice Troupe

I'm always delighted when Juli's class arrives. They love to read, are wisely selecting books—many choices from the history section. A joy to observe and work with them.

(We discuss differences between development of a class and the promotion of staff development.)

Gayle Kirkman

Well, we did get the modem—it functions sporadically. The basic equipment seems to be good, but we're still having trouble getting on line. Who has access to the line? On what basis? We need a coherent system as to who 'has' the line. You're not certain if you are on the line, it takes guts to push the button down when there's so much uncertainty about the other callers. It takes a little training. Teleconferencing is an art of behavior, of leading discussions, of asking questions. We need more opportunities for experiential learning of how to use technology well.

Spreading the effects of the project has been our weakest factor to date. Elementary teachers are so interested in improving their teaching of reading that they will get involved and participate. But we desperately need for the technology to work, to obtain good software. For example, our satellite dish is here, not being used much. We're trying to use dish capability in isolation—actually need to understand its role as a tool for direct, indirect, and supplementary instruction.

Denis Kirkman

> Yes, we are definitely interested in continuing with the project if it goes on. In any case, we will build on events of this year.

May 10-11, 1988

(Emphasis on obtaining reactions of Lake Holcombe personnel to first draft of case study.)

Mary Salo

> You refer to me as a 'reading specialist'; I'm actually certified to work in the area of 'learning disabilities.' Otherwise, no corrections. In fact, I thought it was interesting, especially those sessions with Juli and Vicky.

Juli

> (Refers to her comments in April concerning "Think and Search.")
>
> Yes, that's what I said, but it needs some explanation.
>
> I've taught it (the material) differently from the first day of school. I argued the same point (about drawing inferences) in college classes—still doing it my way.
>
> Videotapes for teachers have four sequences: 'Right There,' 'Think and Search,' 'On My Own,' and 'Author and You.' What they have is fine, but in Storylords tapes that students watch, there's only three. Also only three in the Storylord's Teachers Manual. And that last one (fourth) is the most important because it is the inferencing question. (Figure 7 is an excerpt from the Manual; Juli's addition indicates the point of her discussion.)
>
> I didn't view the teachers' tapes before beginning this year—but felt comfortable from the start with my adaptations. So I modified 'Think and Search' to be congruent with 'Author and You.' When I teach next year, I'll use all four versions. 'Author and You' is based on finding many clues; I was teaching it as 'Think and Search.'

Brief meeting with Juli's class to thank them, say "good-bye," that "our work" might go on next year. If it did, we would again ask for their help. A girl spoke up about the reading tests "we took yesterday and they didn't have any of the things we've done." Her remarks sparked much activity among classmates who had just returned from their daily session in the computer lab. A boy then referred to titles as being helpful "clues." (The observer tried to explain why their tests failed to "keep up" with new programs.) Overall, this spontaneous episode underscored Juli's concerns of April

Figure 7

Application Activity

1. For guided practice, write the following paragraph on the board. Then complete the work chart, having students read each question, give an answer, and identify the QAR.

> The sun is our closest star. It is a million times larger than earth. The sun looks like a round ball of fire. It is made of hot gases that glow. These hot gases give our earth light and heat.

Type of Question-Answer Relationship:	Question:	Answer:
Right There:	1. What does the sun look like?	(round ball of fire)
Think and Search:	2. What is the sun made of?	(hot gases that glow)
On My Own:	3. What do you think might happen to the earth if the sun stopped glowing?	(answers will vary)
Author & You	4	

WORK CHART

Type of Question	Answer	What You Had to Do
1.		
2.		
3.		

NOTE: The goal is to put questions under the control of children. They must be able to develop all three types of QARs to use in monitoring their own comprehension. They will need many activities like the following to move toward this goal. In the classroom, use passages from the students' reading and content area materials.

as reflected in Figure 6 and her comments on the page preceding it. And later, when we discussed the student's reactions, she reported: "Yesterday, when I passed out the tests, one boy looked at the sheet and complained: 'How are we going to use this to activate our prior knowledge?'"

Vicky

> I liked the way things we said were linked to other sources. (She lends the observer some items used with her class.) These (large newsprint sheets) were employed as a type of 'wall map.' The yellow sheet is the first one—white is last. They represent stages in my own development in becoming more comfortable with the program. At first, I was fearful that I was doing it wrong. Had Juli come down to look at material with me. The kids are now doing smaller sheets at their desks, but we're still using these wall charts. I kept them for you as part of my 'portfolio.'

Carol Shimel

> It's (the report) fine with me, but let me ask a question. Isn't it true that when evaluations are added up across places they usually find the same problems everywhere? (Observer responds that common issues are surfacing in this project, too, especially the role of technology. But program implementation is showing differences among the test sites.)

Alice Troupe

> It made sense to me; nothing that made me uncomfortable. You may be interested in knowing that I was asked to represent support staff on the inservice training committee. There are growing indications that faculty want to know more about interactive TV and other technology. (We discuss possible ramifications of that "interest.")

Gayle Kirkman

> The paper is fine: I was intrigued by that dialogue between Juli and Vicky regarding differences in their college experiences. You may have overstated my role, however. (We discuss.)
>
> We're still exploring satellite-related avenues, but find that we'll have to buy another dish if we buy-in with the Oklahoma project—they've been out here—and that's expensive.

Donovan Lapp

> No complaints; everything looks O.K.

Denis Kirkman

> I think the report captures the situation here. We have two fine teachers in the program and are prepared to continue. The people in Madison, though, will have to decide how staff development is going to be executed across the project. Our teachers, for example, need to be more actively engaged in networking with instructors in the other pilot sites.

"Mapping" The Lake Holcombe Stories

In Martin Rein's work noted earlier, he offered the following judgments about story-telling:

> The art of story-telling and advice-giving has only begun to be explored. . . . There is the related task which explicitly tries to translate stories into a concrete course of programmatic action. Programme design is thus a form of social reform and social innovation. (italics added)

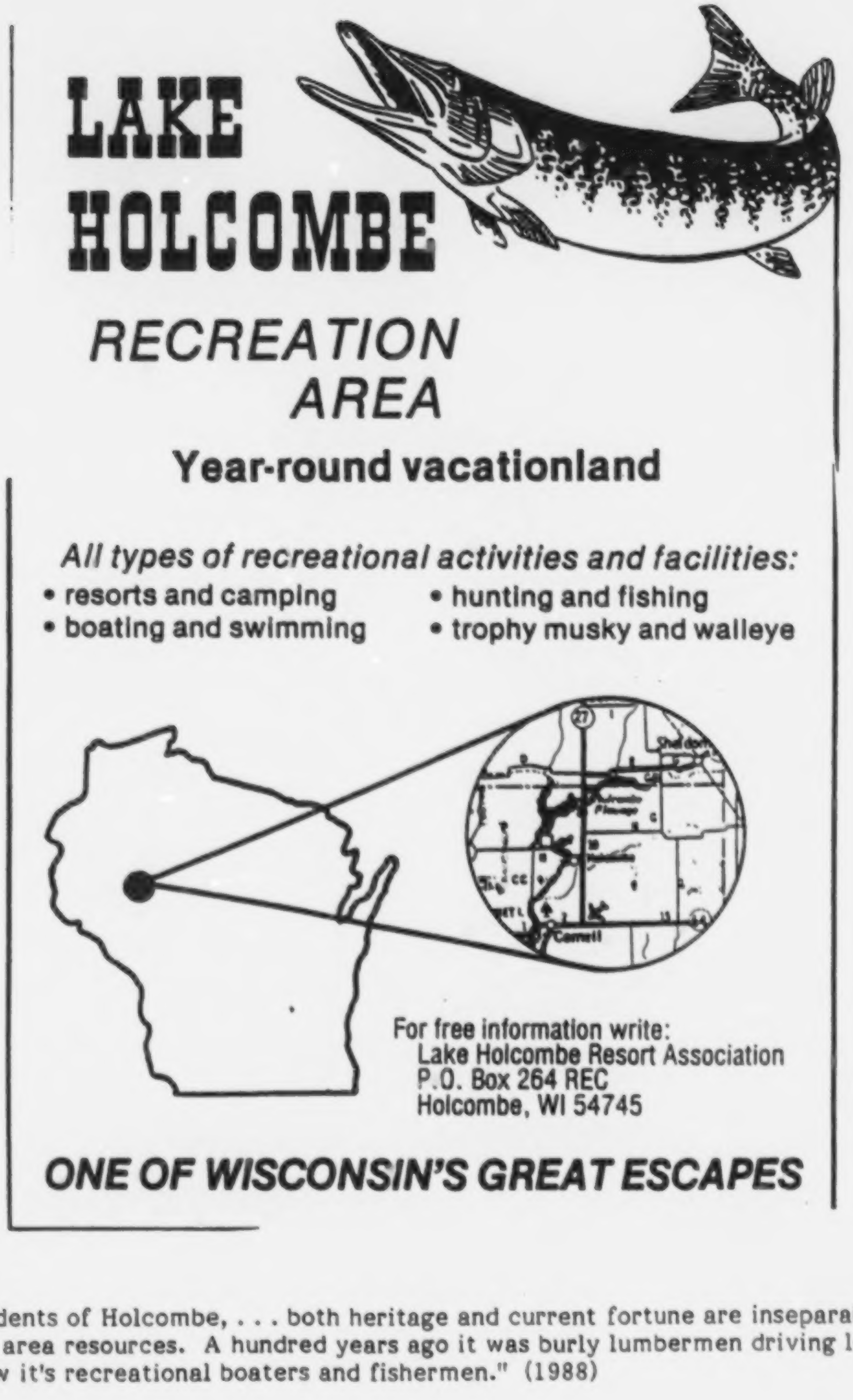
Given his remarks, what meanings can be gleaned from reading the Lake Holcombe stories?

In today's schools, educational innovation is inherently linked to other modes of reform. Donovan Lapp's reference to inter-generational patterns of poverty and their effects underscores this phenomenon. Another illustration was reflected in a discussion centered on the refusal of a young pre-schooler (Lake Holcombe has a federally-funded program for them) to get off the bus and go into the home of his (new) baby-sitter: "We have lots of children like that: so many whose parents don't have the same last name." And in the first mailing received from Mary Salo, this descriptive passage appeared:

> The area has a large portion of low-income families with the only opportunities for employment being in tourism, farming, and logging (see Figure 8).

The elementary section, in particular, responds to the conditions outlined above by providing a rich, child-centered environment. It reminded this observer of the pilot sites for Head Start and Follow Through which were developed in the late 1960s. "Super Kid(s) of the Month and Care Bear of the Month" are pictured in hallways, their names hailed on cafeteria walls. Student art works are on display throughout the entire building; a full-length mirror at the top of the stairs, elementary wing is topped by a sign reading: "This Is How We See You." High school students serve as teaching assistants in some elementary classes, and students in both computer labs were frequently helping each other learn. Overall, this observer was much impressed by the variety of deliberate attempts to create a warm, stimulating atmosphere for young children: the cafeteria and IMC reinforced a host of classroom designs and activities.

Figure 8



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ONE OF WISCONSIN'S GREAT ESCAPES

"For residents of Holcombe, . . . both heritage and current fortune are inseparably tied to use of area resources. A hundred years ago it was burly lumbermen driving logs downriver; now it's recreational boaters and fishermen." (1988)

But this school-based environment is part of a larger context, and issues posed by external influences lend credence to the warning (p. 2) that "increasingly many of the problems we need to confront lie at the boundary between a system and key variables in its environment." One of those variables is embedded in the rush to educational technology. Several years ago, Professor Harry Broudy remarked: "Beginning with Head Start, the task of getting students ready to learn has become as important as the process of teaching them." Widespread and effective use of technology will also require higher levels of readiness among faculties and educational institutions. Lake Holcombe stories are replete with examples: the expectations generated, the frustrations engendered by both its presence and absence. Yet responses offered by Juli and Vicky, their students, and other faculty emphasize the potential benefits of integrating media into the mainstream of schooling.

> Resource-based instructional procedures, broadcast television, computers, or self-instructional packages relying on several media may be worthwhile, not so much because of greater effects, but because they offer the opportunity for self-instruction. 'Sesame Street' and 'The Electric Company,' for example, are not dramatically more effective than first-grade instruction in reading; but they produce positive attitudes and augment instruction handsomely, enabling a certain percentage of students virtually to teach themselves to read (1987).

In light of the above findings, perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the stories presented here concerns the role of students as "carriers" of innovation. If they can function in that capacity, what are the implications for staff and institutional organization and development? To pose that question is to also underscore a pair of issues that has plagued program development in past decades.

One is directly linked to the reliance of so many elementary teachers on workbooks. Juli and Vicky have confronted this matter; John Goodlad (1988) recently gave their words additional significance.

> Beginning with the small child's workbook, what is expected is the rapid filling-in of blanks with disconnected items of information. Knowing is no longer the ability to summon up an organized view of some topic; it is the ability to recognize separate, discontinuous particles. . . .

The second obstacle is reflected in a lack of congruence between standardized tests and emerging forms of teaching - learning styles combined with changing curricula. Measurement and Assessment are hotly-debated topics today, but the essence of the dilemma was captured years ago (1964) in words bearing a striking resemblance to Andy's comments, p. 12.

> . . . In general we have stuck with verbalization and with a form of behavior which represents 'can do' instead of 'does do.' We obtain from our instructions a result which says he can attack problems this way. But does he do it this way outside of the box in which we test him? . . .
>
> We are in a position either of demonstrating that taste, attitudes, and cognitive preference are meaningless in terms of education or of devising ways of locating the lines of change. . . .
>
> In the beginning such approaches will lack some of the qualities we like: precision, objectivity, countability. . . . It sounds clinical, yes, but it might beat a current trend . . . merely to buy more subjects for the same test.

Finally, Morriss's caution (p. 2) about maintaining a balanced perspective on "professional role performance" is highlighted in tales told by Lake Holcombe respondents. Mary Salo, writing as "partner-evaluator," supplies a fitting close.

Postscript

"I see my role as a Partner-Evaluator/Team Leader basically as a facilitator and a disseminator of information. First as Team Leader, the Target Teachers were inserviced on the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project. I utilized what I had learned at inservice meetings and broke it down for the teachers into usable and relevant portions of materials. In the same manner, I screened material that was mailed to me and gave them only the information that I thought was relevant and necessary for classroom teaching. I wanted the Target Teachers to be concerned with teaching reading strategies and not to be concerned with the administration of the Project. I tried to clarify any confusing items the Target Teachers ran across. We tried to meet on a regular basis and discuss what was happening in their classrooms. I arranged for inservice days or half days for the teachers on these instances. I also observed them teaching lessons using reading strategies.

As a Partner-Evaluator, I felt my role was to be a contact person for the Evaluator, Gordon Hoke. I tried to assist him in finding out information that was relevant to the Project, and provide access to the people he needed to talk with. I also gave him honest opinions of how the Project was working, both criticisms and commendations.

Both roles of Partner-Evaluator/Team Leader worked well together for me. I was the one person in the school building who was familiar with all aspects of the Reading Project at Lake Holcombe."

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EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT
OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
IN THE
MELROSE-MINDORO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by
Thomas A. Schwandt

Submitted to:
The Office of Educational Evaluation & Policy Studies
Northern Illinois University
for
The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

May, 1988

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INTRODUCTION

Seventeen miles northeast of Melrose, at the edge of the Black River State Forest, lies the city of Black River Falls, population circa 3400. It was from a motel there that I made my daily trips to the Melrose-Mindoro Area School District in the late fall and early spring.

The winding drive through the sparsely populated area traversed several hills, ran past the long abandoned red brick Irving Schoolhouse No.6, and around numerous coulees carved into the gently rolling landscape. This is an unglaciated part of the state. Its hills are forested with birch, maple, oak, and other deciduous tress and the occasional stand of pine. Signs for deer crossings are abundant as is evidence of snowmobile trails. The road often narrowed as dairy farms with their outbuildings and silos straddled its width. Some twenty-five minutes into the drive, I entered the upper table of the Black River and the village of Melrose in the southwest corner of Jackson County. Melrose Elementary sits near the north edge of town about one block off the main street. It abuts a baseball diamond, and behind it the landscape stretches out unspoiled.

Melrose has a population of about 510 folks. Its collection of about 35 businesses includes a newspaper, a bank, and two new car dealerships. A "Welcome to Melrose" brochure available at the local bank advertises that the community offers "clean air, relaxed living, and a great place to raise a family away from the turmoil of big city living." The husband and wife team that publish the weekly Melrose newspaper, The Chronicle, the school superintendent, the principal, school teachers, and others in the community that I spoke with take great pride in their village, its relaxed pace, and the natural beauty of its environment. Several people were quick to point out that residents of the village and the surrounding area have raised over $200,000 in contributions to construct a public swimming pool and bathhouse. A poster outside the bank charted the rising contributions on a thermometer-like scale.

From Melrose Elementary I drove past the three or so blocks of buildings that line the main street, across the bridge spanning the Black River, and into LaCrosse County. A short distance south of the river crossing, the road begins a long, gentle climb through a stand of towering evergreens forming a roofless tunnel. A few hundred yards past the trees is Melrose-Mindoro High School, home of about 240 students in the heart of the Dairyland Conference. I had traveled almost exactly six miles from Melrose Elementary.

From the high school, I drove still further south, leaving the upper table of the river and traversing a steep hill. To an urbanite like me, negotiating that hill in the midst of winter was not something that I would have looked forward to. But from what I heard from local teachers, the way into Mindoro from the west and south poses even greater winter driving challenges.[1.] At the bottom of the hill, the road flattened out and curved into a valley, and there a sign erected by the local Jaycees welcomed me to the unincorporated area of Mindoro, population circa 400. Main street Mindoro is a quieter place than Melrose. During a one-hour stretch at mid-day, less than a half-dozen cars passed me while I sat on a concrete retaining wall across the street from the farm supply store. In addition to that store, Mindoro's main street holds a gas station, a post office, a bank, a couple of restaurant/bars, a grocery store, and a few other assorted buildings. Just past the farm supply store, at the edge of town, is Mindoro Elementary, almost exactly six miles from Melrose-Mindoro High School.

To an outsider there are features of the district that make it seem isolated: no doctor, dentist, or lawyer resides in the district; there is no public library or movie theatre; there is curently no emergency ambulance service (though efforts are being made to revive it). But the sense of isolation lies in the eyes of the beholder. To the residents of the district, their way of life is a refuge from the hustle, the blooming, buzzing confusion (to borrow a phrase from William James) of larger city life. Melrose-Mindoro is a place that values community and neighborliness. A place where it is natural for The Chronicle to tell the stories of the lives of area residents by printing a candid photo of a different resident each week under the caption, "We Saw YOU This Week!" or telling of various residents' doings in regular columns labeled "Around the Town" and "News Highlights from the Mindoro Area:" "Tom and Ann had a late Easter dinner for Larry and Grace and their family on Sunday." Each evening when I left the Melrose-Mindoro area and headed back to my motel in a city of 3400, I has the sense that I was traveling a long way to a much busier place.

Two other features of the district and the school-community relationship were apparent in my visits. The first is that Melrose and Mindoro are different, distinct communities. Alan Peshkin, in one of his studies of schools in the midwestern countryside, wrote that residents of various villages comprising a school district have a sense about themselves and about their relationships with other places:

> a sense that is derived from a compound of historical and contemporary fact and fiction. There is virtually no locale so small that it lacks a history distinguishing it from other locales that seem to look just like it. Its distinctiveness (no matter if it exists only in the eyes of the residents) sets it apart from others, makes it

> conscious of and sensitive to its boundaries, and gives rise to a feeling of inside-outside and of we-they.[2]

Signs of the distinctiveness of Melrose and Mindoro and the importance attached to treating each community equally in school district affairs were evident. For example, it was not simply coincidence that approximately 20 years ago the district high school was erected almost exactly equidistant from the elementary schools in Melrose and Mindoro, or that the high school has its checking account in a Mindoro Bank one year and a Melrose bank the next, or that I was told that one always refers to the district using the hyphenated Melrose-Mindoro, or that the school board has placed before the residents a plan to to build a new junior high on the high school site (as opposed to remodeling the old Melrose high school building) thereby ensuring that "Melrose and Mindoro 6th, 7th, 8th grades would all be receiving the same educational opportunities in the same setting."[3]

Even the newspaper editor was reminded by one subscriber of the importance of not favoring one community over the other as seen in this recent letter to the editor:

> Dear Editor,
>
> In the March 30, 1988 edition of The Chronicle, you mentioned that ten years ago _______ won the spelling bee for the second time at Melrose.
>
> You forgot to mention that ten years ago, I won the spelling bee for the second time at Mindoro.
>
> As usual, Mindoro students are left out of recognition and are second class citizens.[4]

Each community has its own sense of belonging, pride, and identity, and school district officials and the board of education are sensitive to the need to treat each equally.

My visits to the district also confirmed another of Peshkin's eariler observations of rural schools:

> In small places, where there is so little happening of a public nature, the presence of a school is likely to make a day seem noteworthy, when otherwise days may run unremarkably together, one much like another. Thanks to their school, villagers are afforded something to remark upon that is solely theirs.... A school's events are internal markers and manifestations of the collective life of the community.[5]

The high school principal pointed out that "we're the major cultural attraction; if it wasn't for the school, the Melrose Chronicle would be a lot smaller." The district superintendent also noted the centrality of the school in the life of the community: "The school system is a big draw for the public--its music programs in the spring and fall, its Christmas concert and its athletic programs. Our high school graduation is not only a big educational event, it is a major social event for the community." An inspection of several issues of the newspaper confirms this. The paper carries the agenda for the regular meeting of the board of education as well as the text of the minutes of the meetings; it publishes the weekly school lunch menu and carries extensive coverage of students' academic achievements, school sports, and other extra-curricular activities. A most recent edition carried a several page article on a field trip made by Melrose-Mindoro fourth graders to a dairy farm. More than fifty reports of fourth-graders' reactions to the trip were printed in the paper.

THE DISTRICT AND ITS SCHOOLS

The school district is anchored by the population centers of Melrose and Mindoro. Still smaller towns like Irving, Four Corners, North Bend, Burr Oak, Stevenstown, and Franklin which once supported country schools have for many years sent their children to Melrose-Mindoro schools. According to the newspaper editors, about 4600 people live in the school district. Each of the 900 households in the district receives a quarterly newsletter from the superintendent containing information on school-related matters. The December 1987 issue carried an article on the district's participation in the rural reading improvement project written by the two reading specialists who led the project.

The population of the area has been relatively stable over the past ten years; however, since 1984; enrollment in the two elementary schools has been increasing. The need to establish additional class sections in K-4 coupled with the lack of available K-4 classroom space in the existing elementary buildings and the fact that existing junior high classroom space (particularly at Melrose) is not appropriate for the purposes (e.g., science, reading, art) for which it is being used has led the board and the administration to consider several options. During the current school year, the board elected to pursue the option of constructing a $1.6 million junior high school at the high school site. On June 14, district taxpayers will vote on this construction plan in a referendum.

The district has an instructional staff of 50 and a total K-12 enrollment of about 745. Melrose Elementary, with a total enrollment of 291, has two classes each at the K-3 levels and one large fourth grade class. Mindoro Elementary, with an enrollment of 207, has one class each at K-4. Grades 5 through 8 at each school are in a junior high schedule. The staff at Melrose consists of 14 regular teachers, two special education teachers, and a reading specialist who is also the Chapter 1 teacher. Mindoro has 10 regular teachers, a special education teacher, and an acting reading specialist who is also the Chapter 1 teacher. The physical education and music teachers split their time between both elementary schools, and a K-12 art teacher also works with children in both schools.

In 1986-87, the district spent approximately $70,000 (excluding athletic supplies and equipment) on non-capital, curriculum-related items including text books and workbooks (c.$14,000), office supplies, classroom supplies (c.$40,000), library books (c.$2,400), and audio-visual media (c.$3,200). The per pupil expenditure is below the state average, which the superintendent attributes to lower than average teacher salaries.

Under the leadership of the superintendent, the district places strong emphasis on K-8 educational achievement. SRA achievement tests are administered in the fall of each year, and the superintendent issues a report to K-8 staff, parents, and the board of education summarizing results and displaying percentages of students scoring above the national norm as well as the district's performance over the past ten years. Near the end of each school year, the reading specialists and the superintendent administer locally developed, objectives-based, criterion referenced tests in reading and mathematics to K-8 students. The district goal is 90 percent mastery, and, according to the 1987 test report, the district is coming close to that goal. At the K-4 level, teachers are officially recognized when their classes achieve mastery at the 80 and 90 percent levels.

The superintendent takes great pride in these measures of achievement; he initiated the mastery testing program when he assumed the superintendency ten years ago. During our first conversation, he displayed charts showing the increase in mastery over the past ten years and noted "we have shown the public what our students are accomplishing." The mastery testing program was on the minds of target teachers when I spoke with them on my last visit. Several expressed the hope that their students' reading mastery scores would improve as a result of students' exposure to the new reading strategies.

The high school is both the symbolic and actual center of administrative authority, control, and responsibility in the district. It houses the superintendent who also serves as the elementary supervisor, the high school principal who is responsible for (among many other things) the K-12 instructional program, and the district media specialist. Stretching from the high school north to Melrose and south to Mindoro are two telephone lines, each with a different exchange, connecting the high school to each elementary school. Because it is a long distance call between elementary schools, whenever possible, the high school relays messages between schools to avoid long distance charges. The high school is also the site where the teleconferencing equipment and the electronic bulletin board for the rural reading improvement project were located (see "The Telecommunications Component" section of this report).

The first thing that greets the visitor to Melrose Elementary is a bulletin board in the hall outside the room of the reading specialist. Each time that I visited, it was decorated with a display reflecting a reading strategy that the target teachers were using. The building is clearly crowded: A fourth grade class of 39 sits in one classroom; the teachers' workroom/lounge has been moved to a basement storage area and the teachers' room converted to a special education classroom. In the 1987-88 school year, the need for an additional third-grade section required converting space previously used for special education into a third-grade classroom. Activity room stage space was then converted to a special education room.

At Melrose, the media center/library sits at the junction of two wings of the school. The north wing houses the kindergarten classes, and grades 1, 2, and 4. Third-grade classes and grades 5-8 are located in the south wing. From the north wing, one enters the media center through a wide hall. Along one wall of the hall is the entrance to a third-grade classroom, the photocopying and mimeograph machines, the PA system, and the time clock. Televisions and VCRs on carts line the other wall. Through the media center, one exits to the junior high wing. The media center is not a very inviting place. Traffic flows through it to either end of the building; the telephone for the school is located there; the facility is dimly decorated. The center is staffed by an aide who, in addition to managing the loan of materials, serves as the receptionist, handles some typing chores, and assumes playground and lunch duties.

Mindoro Elementary is a newer two-story facility. Grades K-4 occupy the upper floor; grades 5-8 and the media center are located on the first floor. It too is experiencing space problems. The teacher's workroom/lounge is located in what was the principal's office which also houses the A-V collection. During the current school year, some Mindoro kindergarten children were bused to Melrose to relieve some of the pressure on available classroom space. Like the library at Melrose, the Mindoro library is staffed by an aide who has multiple school-related duties.

THE PROJECT AND ITS PARTICIPANTS

The district leadership team for the project is nominally composed of the superintendent, the high school principal, the reading specialists at Melrose and Mindoro, and the district media specialist. The high school principal is the administrative head of the team; he described his role on the project in the following way: "My job is to keep the wheels greased and if teachers have a problem, to do what I can." He was responsible for arranging the logistics of my site visits, and he also submitted the paperwork to Wisconsin project staff for teachers' reimbursement. Both administrators expressed the view that this was a project for teachers. They endorsed the general goal of improving reading comprehension, but neither was directly involved nor familiar with the activities of participating teachers. Both the administrators and the target teachers acknowledged that project leadership in each school was provided by the two reading specialists.

At Melrose, the reading specialist splits her time between that role and serving as a Chapter 1 teacher. She has been a teacher in the district for 42 years and inspires a great deal of personal loyalty among her fellow teachers. She recruited three target teachers for the project: Two team-teach the large fourth grade class mentioned earlier. One of these teachers has been with the district for 20 years; the other has served as a substitute in the district for 12 years and returned to full-time teaching this year to help handle the large class. The third participant in Melrose is a second-grade teacher, who, following a long hiatus, returned to teaching two years ago. She recently acquired a master's degree in reading.

At Mindoro, the acting reading specialist and Chapter 1 teacher has been with the district 35 years. She recruited the third and fourth grade teachers to work on the project. These two teachers have been with the district 13 and 10 years, respectively. Like her counterpart at Melrose, the Mindoro reading specialist has a history of regularly meeting informally with her fellow teachers to discuss student achievement.

The media specialist has been with the district 11 years. He also serves as the district computer coordinator, director of the language laboratory, and the supervisor of the high school library and media center. He and two aides at the high school are responsible for the loan of print and audio-visual materials to students and the community, administration of makeup tests at the high school, resale of consummable supplies to students, and printing of materials for the district.

Initial Reactions to the Project

When I arrived for my first visit at the end of November, there was an air of guarded optimism about participation in the project. Teachers were very positive about a new approach to reading and excited about improving reading comprehension, but those opinions were tempered by a feeling of being overwhelmed by the amount of time that was required tc read the materials, listen to the audio tapes, attend the teleconferences, and so forth. Because of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient numbers of qualified substitutes and the time required to prepare materials needed for those substitutes, the target teachers had decided to take time outside of the regular school day to participate in the project rather than use released time. Teachers felt that to keep up with the reading required for the project they were taking time away from their families. Virtually every teacher showed me a thick three-binder of project reading material that was being passed on to them by their reading specialists and commented on the volume of the material:

> "There's a lot to do and no time available during the day."

> "One of our teachers read a lot of this material for her master's degree last year! They're expecting a lot of classroom teachers to do this when our first priority is the classroom."

> "We work hard here to keep up on the reading. The major complaint is that it takes too much time."

> "The biggest problem we have here is time. There's not enough. There is no way we can get time off during the day."

Concerns about the amount of material and lack of time were coupled with confusion over project organization and what was expected of participants:

> "There's no syllabus or synopsis to help us prepare, keep track, know what's coming."

> "We were unsure at first what to do with all the material. We wanted to know how long do we have to get this finished?"

> "There's some disorganization on the part of program designers. There's no overall idea of what's to be covered, what we should do in a certain length of time."

In addition, there was some confusion among the reading specialists and the media specialist regarding receipt of project material. On some occasions, material and information would be sent to a reading specialist, at other times it would be sent to the media specialist.

Members of the leadership team noted that the October 8 meeting of project staff in Eau Claire did little to clarify project intent and responsibilities. Team members felt that the Wisconsin project staff was disorganized. In October, following the meeting, there had been some talk among target teachers of withdrawing from the project, but under the encouragement of the reading specialists, who believed that the project would prove valuable for improving reading comprehension, the decision had been made to continue. Participation in the early months tested the limits of teachers' cooperation and commitment. Were it not for the enthusiasm and encouragement of the reading specialists and the desire of all participants not to be perceived as folks who did not finish what they started, the project might have dropped.

In mid-November, shortly before my visit, Ros Wold of the Wisconsin project staff had paid a visit to the district. Her presence on site and her willingness to listen to teachers' concerns raised the spirits of all those involved in the project. As one target teacher put it: "After we met Ros, it helped make things seem more real; that there was someone in charge." As a result of her visit, teachers were more appreciative of project organizers' efforts and overall project intent. Nonetheless, at this point in late November, teachers were feeling the burden of participating in the project.

Second Impressions

When I returned in late April, attitudes toward the project as a whole and the material had improved considerably. Teachers had been using the three strategies of prior knowledge, inferencing, and story mapping and were pleased with the results. The pace of the project had been slowed by Wisconsin staff and the volume of reading material reduced. The materials on inferencing and story mapping had arrived as packaged instructional units complete with a table of contents, worksheets, assessment tools, reading material for the classroom, and so forth. Although several teachers still felt that there was too much material in these units, all welcomed the idea of organized, planned units of instruction. They felt that the change in the delivery of materials was a response to their concerns expressed early on in the project. Problems remained in the technology aspect of the project (see "The Telecommunications Component" section of this report); however, teachers were enthusiastic about what was happening in the classroom:

> "The reading strategies, themselves, are worthwhile. The techniques boost learner confidence and involvement. There is much more student participation."
>
> "The units on inferencing and story mapping by Ros Wold were very helpful. All the resource material by researchers in the study of reading comprehension was valuable because we would not have had access to that material otherwise."
>
> "The strategy of prior knowledge is very successful. It encourages participation from all students and helps them relate new information to personal experiences. Inferencing promoted the same type of enthusiasm and many times students' ideas were better than the stated conclusions! I used these approaches many times and felt that the student response was excellent."
>
> "The three strategies we have worked on so far have been good and worthwhile. My students seem to put more into their reading because we do prior knowledge our stories. They also understand their reading stories better. Putting clues together to do inferencing has caused my students to read more strategically. They're searching for more meaning from their text. I also find them coming up with pretty neat things when we predict."

Project Activities

As of the end of November, target teachers from Melrose and Mindoro had participated as a group in two teleconferences and viewed two video tapes in the "Teaching Reading Comprehension" Series. They individually tackled the reading material and listened to copies of the first three SCA Radio series tapes at their convenience. Modeling of reading strategies had not yet begun. In fact, during my first visit, many of the teachers lamented the lack of modeling and demonstration in the materials:

> "The idea of the program is good, it's the delivery that's the problem. It lacks modeling. It's only auditory, but we learn by what we see....I had to listen to Ros' tape [in the SCA Radio series] three times to get it straight."
>
> "From the start I would have liked to see examples of teachers in the classroom using the strategies. It would have helped to see some modeling right away. The program was too theoretical at the start."
>
> "If you show us [as opposed to have us read about it], it will get through to us."

Between their meetings as a combined Melrose-Mindoro group, each school's target teachers and their respective reading specialist met either formally or informally to share ideas and experiences. The reading specialists indicated that prior to the start of the project they typically met two or three times a week to share ideas about reading and Chapter 1 activities; once the project began they added it to their meeting agendas.

By the time of my second visit, target teachers had jointly participated in four more teleconferences and viewed the video tape "Survey, Predict, Read, Construct, and Summarize." Three additional SCA tapes had become available and were duplicated for individual use. Other than this addition of new material, there were two major differences in project activities between my two visits.

First, by April, teachers had begun to model the reading strategies. In Melrose, one of the fourth-grade target teachers planned two lessons and delivered them in each third-grade classroom; the second-grade target teacher also modeled a reading strategy for the other second-grade teacher. In

Mindoro, on two occasions, the reading specialist modeled a reading strategy for the two target teachers.

Second, all but one of the target teachers had attended either the Microcomputer Fair at Eau Claire and/or the Wisconsin Reading Association conference in Oconomowoc using funds provided through the project. These conferences were experience-producing (as opposed to a knowledge-producing) events. Convictions about the value of teaching reading strategies and notions such as metacognition became personal knowings as a result of what teachers heard and saw at the conferences.[6.] As one teacher put it: "I found out that what we had been doing was important in reading!"

Additional Concerns about Implementation

Early in the year, several target teachers had been using the Storylords series in their classrooms and they all reported enthusiastic responses to the material from their students. In October, they were advised by Wisconsin project staff to discontinue use, but were never told exactly why. Teachers speculated that State staff wanted to control the pace and order of reading strategies being delivered through the project and that the Storylords series did not follow the same plan. Two of the target teachers continued using the series because they felt it was helping their students become better readers.

All teachers involved in the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project lamented the lack of adequate library materials and a skilled librarian in each elementary school to support the reading project. Library materials in both schools were described by teachers as "outdated," "ancient," and "archaic." They noted that the media specialist/librarian located at the high school had multiple duties to attend to there and could not be at all three schools in the district at the same time.

Throughout the project, the media specialist felt that his role was almost exclusively limited to that of a technical specialist: "my role was pretty narrow in scope, as a technical person; my expertise as a librarian was overlooked and never seemed to be expected of me for this project." He indicated that he had received little or no information on the role of library services in the project, and the log of his project activities indicated that his time was devoted to setting up the teleconferencing equipment, solving problems with SCA radio reception, taping programs off the air waves, duplicating audio and video tapes, and remodeling the main console desk in the language library to accommodate the electronic bulletin board.

Finally, throughout the course of the project, both reading specialists made an effort to informally share reading materials and audio tapes with teachers not directly involved in the project. They prepared a special audio tape on the prior knowledge strategy for all K-8 teachers, and they passed along the SCA audio tape on inferencing. Other teachers in both schools were aware of target teachers' involvement in the project and the fact that participation was requiring much time and effort. However, non-target teachers had only limited familiarity with the content of the project and the new approach to reading (see, the "Recommendations" section of this report).

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPONENT

In addition to the general goal of improving reading programs in rural schools, the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project was intended to "demonstrate a viable way to deliver the components of technical assistance and staff development using a variety of telecommunications-based delivery systems and types of programming."[7] The delivery and location of the four technologies used in the project are important concerns in understanding this aspect of the project.

Video Broadcasts of "Teaching Reading Comprehension"

With the exception of the lack of modeling in early programs in this series, teachers were generally positive about this medium for the delivery of information and instruction. Several teachers reported taking home various tapes to view them on their VCRs. However, delivery of this aspect of the project did not occur as planned. The district experienced some problems with the reception of the television signal and some tapes were needed that had not yet been broadcast. To solve these problems, the media specialist located a complete set of all fourteen video tapes in the series from a colleague in West Salem and duplicated them for use by the target teachers. Thus, the fact that Wisconsin project staff set up broadcast schedules for the series so that programs could be taped off the air was not a factor in this district's use of this technology.

SCA Radio Series

With the exception of problems in receiving tapes on time, teachers were particularly pleased with this medium. They appreciated the fact that individual copies of tapes were made available by the media and reading specialists for their personal use. They liked the portability and convenience of an audio tape and the fact that they could easily rewind, interrupt, and replay it.

However, the relative ease with which the district obtained access to the video programs can be contrasted to the problems encountered in reception of the SCA Radio programs. As of my April visit, the media specialist was still experiencing serious difficulties in taping these programs off the air. Static on the main channel and a weak side band signal frustrated his efforts to obtain clear recordings. Attempts to retape programs and filter out the static yielded only marginal improvements in quality.

Wisconsin project staff informed the media specialist that the problems were on his end in reception. They sent copies of the tapes to the district, but a November 30 memo to the media specialist from a member of the project staff warned him to correct problems because no additional tapes would be forthcoming:

> "The next series of SCA radio programs begins January 20th. By that time I assume you will have installed an outside FM radio antenna and/or have learned how to tape record clear versions of the programs. PLEASE CALL ME IF YOU CANNOT HAVE THIS PROBLEM CORRECTED BY JANUARY 20TH, AS I AM NOT PLANNING TO SEND ANYMORE TAPES AFTER TODAY. [Emphasis in original].

The media specialist was particularly upset at this memo. He felt that he had been working diligently to solve the radio reception problem; the district had spent money on an antenna and related equipment with no significant improvement in reception, and he knew the problem was not a lack of knowledge on his part of how to tape record clear programs.

Despite the memo, tapes continued to be sent. Problems with reception persisted: the media specialist learned that the network was only broadcasting at 20-40 percent of full power when he was requested to make a test tape; in January the radio network was off the air for several weeks while repairs were made to a transmission tower; in late winter, wind and snow damaged the district's antenna system; in a January teleconference with all media specialists involved in the project, it was learned that other schools were experiencing similar problems in reception; in mid-April, a member of the technical staff of Wisconsin Public Radio and TV visited the school and confirmed weather damage to the antenna and wiring system and a lack of proper electrical connections and indicated that major repairs were needed.

The media specialist felt that he had wasted a great deal of time, energy, and district money on this aspect of the project. Because of project insistence on taping the programs off the air, the district's difficulty in receiving them clearly, and the fact that delays were experienced in receiving tapes by mail, tapes were often not obtained in time to coordinate with other aspects of the project. The media specialist saw no reason why copies of the tapes could not have been mailed from the outset of the project.

Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing capability posed no technical problems. The district had been part of the CESA 4 CTN Network for some time and, following some minor modifications, it was up and running with this technology by mid-September. Teachers understood and accepted the intent of this telecommunications component: to reach geographically widespread, multiple audiences simultaneously. However, they regarded its application in this project as a "nice" but not essential feature. After some initial reluctance to speak over the network, teachers enjoyed sharing experiences with other teachers via this medium; however, they all felt, as one teacher expressed it, that "better communication goes on when people are together."

Attitudes toward the value of this technology were related to its location at the high school and to the physical arrangement of the teleconferencing equipment. Travel to the high school to participate in the teleconferences was clearly perceived as a disadvantage by the teachers at both schools. Teachers would have preferred to have the teleconferencing capability in each school. Furthermore, the arrangment of the equipment at the high school was less than ideal. To participate in the teleconference teachers sat at workstations along one wall in the language laboratory. A four-feet wide aisle separated the workstations on the wall from another row of language booths. It was very difficult for teachers to face one another during the conferences and, occasionally, their conversation would be interrupted by staff or students entering the the language lab. Teachers also noted that the scheduling of conferences after the close of the school day was less than ideal. There were times, after a long and tiring day, that teachers did not look forward to the prospect of participating.

Electronic Bulletin Board

Target teachers had few things to say about this technology. It too was located in the language laboratory at the high school. According to the media specialist, the district was the second school in the project to go on-line with this technology after receiving the needed software from state project staff in late January. Teachers had received a demonstration of the technology from the media specialist, but none had yet used it. The media specialist had sent and received a few messages dealing with aspects of the telecommunications components of the project.

According to the media specialist, this technology is not very practical:

> "It takes forever to get through on the line...when everyone else in the state for this project is trying to call in. Also, it takes quite a while to get into the system and through all the passwords to gain access and finally to read your messages. You end up tying up the phone lines for quite some time. Since we only have one line to use, which is used by the

> rest of the high school, the office, administration, etc., we only use the system after school, 4:30 or later, when our lines are open."

PERCEIVED BENEFITS

With the exception of one target teacher who had recently acquired a master's degree and the reading specialists, the teachers participating in this project were introduced for the first time to a new way of thinking about reading. When I asked them "what have you learned from your participation in this project" here is what they had to say:

> "I feel I am a better teacher of reading because of my participation in this project. I have learned to slow down my teaching--getting to the end of the text is not so important. I have learned how important it is to teach children to think."
>
> "I never thought that we could teach kids to think about their thinking."
>
> "I have been out of school for a long time and I got to learn some new ideas and the latest in reading research."
>
> "The three main strategies...were not new to me. However, I came to realize the importance of using them all through the reading lesson. Also, I became aware that it must be modeled again and again until it becomes part of the student's metacognitive thinking."
>
> "I have learned to spend more time developing prior knowledge before reading; to teach children to stop and make predictions as they read; that children need to see teachers model how to read and think before we can expect them to know how to do it by themselves. Much of the seatwork in the past is of multiple-choice type answers, and children do more guessing than thinking. Students need to monitor their own thinking as they read, and they have to be taught to do it on their own or they really don't know what reading is all about."
>
> "We've come to realize that reading is a constructive, strategic process. We've learned of the importance of the interactive dialogue that must go on between the teachers and the students."

Teachers felt that their participation in the project had laid the groundwork for continued use of these strategies in the classroom. They also found benefits in the fact that the project drew them together to discuss ideas and share experiences. The reading specialists looked forward to reteaching the strategies next year, developing each in more detail.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions on how to improve the project were focused on expanding it to include more teachers in K-8. Participants expressed the fear that the gains made this year by students would be lost if the strategic approach to reading instruction were not reinforced in subsequent grades. Target teachers and the reading specialists would like to see some school-wide inservice time devoted to sharing the concepts and strategies that they were introduced to in this project, and they talked about ways to best present this to their colleagues:

> "Is there some way to get all content area teachers educated on these strategies without the heavy dose of reading material? I am 'sold' on what we've been doing, but I know that lots of teachers who also need these strategies will never go along with all the meetings, tapes, videos, teleconferences, and readings. It needs to be 'capsulized' for other content area teachers."
>
> "I feel the lack of time to in-service the teachers not in the project was bad for us. Now that we have all these materials, I think we need a special time set aside to present them to all the elementary staff."
>
> "[It was] a drawback not having the time to meet with the principal and the media specialist to discuss our project."
>
> "I think it [the project's material] should definitely be used with junior high or middle school teachers in content area teaching. They think reading is a reading class and elementary education concern only--it's not! It's everyone's."

Other suggestions centered around coping with the large volume of material that teachers received. Some teachers suggested further reducing the amount of material in the organized units of instruction that were provided for inferencing and story mapping. A few teachers suggested that the project material be offered as a summer course for credit.

PROJECT COSTS

It is difficult to account precisely for all the costs involved in the district's participation in the project. However, a rough cost estimate is possible. According to the media specialist, using various grant monies the district spent approximately $2200 on equipment (e.g., Apple computers, FM antenna, cables and jacks, stereo cassette recorder, tape dubbing deck) in conjunction with the project. This does not include the cost of blank audio and video tapes.

The five target teachers, two reading specialists, and the media specialist estimated that they each spent two to three hours per week on the project outside of the classroom. Over the course of the school year, the project ran about 36 weeks. Thus, approximately 720 person-hours were invested in the project [36 weeks x 2.5 hrs/wk (avg.) x 8 participants]. This is likely to be a low estimate because it does not include administrator's time.

Using an average salary of $12 per hour (derived from the district's 1986-87 budget for teacher salaries), the total cost of the person-hour investment is $8640. Again, this is likely a low estimate given that some teachers on the project have higher than average salaries in view of their long tenure with the district.

The Wisconsin project provided an $800 per semester reimbursement to the district. Therefore, total cost to the district of the project for the school year is approximatley $7000.

POTENTIAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The preceding pages portray the implementation of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project in the Melrose-Mindoro Area Schools as seen through the eyes of those who participated in the project. What follows are lessons that might be learned from this one rendering of one instance of project implementation. While reviewing the case, readers undoubtedly began to form their own views of what might be learned here. The lessons recounted below seem particularly salient to this evaluator in this site, and I caution the reader not to assume that what might be learned in this situation will readily transfer to other situations in other rural districts.

Lesson 1: Teach Teachers Like Teachers Teach

The teachers of Melrose-Mindoro plan their teaching carefully. They develop lesson plans specifying objectives, activities, resources, and time required, and they teach according to those plans. Planning affords degrees of control over the teaching day and provides at least some assurances that critical material/lessons have been identified and will be delivered. Given the centrality of the importance of instructional planning in the lives of these teachers, it is not surprising that they looked for a similar kind of clarity and organization in the project. They wanted to know what was expected of them, what the project was designed to accomplish, and how long they were to spend on various project activities. The lack of this kind of clarity at the outset of the project was discouraging and did not inspire teachers' confidence. In designing locally-based staff improvement programs, it seems wise first to consider carefully how it is that teachers teach and to design the program to be compatible with their pedagogy.

Lesson 2: Provide Clear WIIFM's (What's In it For Me?) At the Outset

During the initial months of the project, teachers in Melrose-Mindoro persisted because they did not want to disappoint key school leaders and because they clung to the belief that they might discover something that would benefit their students. Not only were they unclear about what was expected of them, but they also lacked a strong set of incentives to participate. Hindsight shows us that teachers here were glad they persisted because their investment did yield a return.

However, hoped-for returns and personal loyalties may not always be strong enough incentives. Teachers in Melrose-Mindoro came close to not experiencing the wisdom and joy of hindsight. It seems apparent that if, at the outset of the program, teachers had a clearer understanding of what they could expect to gain from participation, their commitment to and interest in the project might be better sustained.

Lesson 3: Demonstrate How It's Done

A picture is worth a thousand words, and for years advertisers have recognized that demonstrations are one of the most effective means of attracting consumers' attention. Wisconsin project staff was "selling" a new product and most of the teachers at Melrose-Mindoro were first-time consumers. During my first visit, teachers, while often bedazzled by the new vocabulary and concepts, were not totally "sold" on the notion that something really new was afoot. It appears that only after they witnessed some modeling, did they begin to see that there was something distinctly different and useful about this strategic approach to reading.

Teachers are practitioners, so why not appeal first to their actual practices? It might have been wise to catch teachers' attention with a video tape or two of a classroom demonstration and then encourage discussion among teachers about how this approach might be different from their current instructional activities. Once teachers begin to see the difference that this approach can make in classroom practice, then information from reading experts on the rationale, concepts, and theory of strategic reading could be effectively introduced.

Lesson 4: Facilitate Local Adoption of Technologies

This case demonstrated that technologies will only be used to the extent that they are compatible with the physical and organizational realities of implementation in a particular rural setting. The realities of project participation in this district dictated that teacher preparation had to be done outside of school. The availability of mutilple copies of SCA Radio tapes and ready access to a complete set of the video tapes allowed teachers to design their study time around their daily schedules. Printed matter would have served the same purpose, but teachers found the audio and visual portrayals to be an important supplement to the printed material being distributed by the project.

These two technologies are essentially one way communication channels: they improved the flow of new information into the district. The two technologies (teleconferencing and the electronic bulletin board) that are two-way channels--i.e., enabling the district to actually reach beyond its geographical boundaries to share resources, experiences, and so forth--were not fully or successfully integrated in this district to ensure their continued use beyond the present project.

Participation in the teleconferences was regarded as interesting, but it is probable that if given a choice, teachers would not choose to make an after school trip to the high school to use the technology. It simply is inconvenient, and unless teachers can be shown that what is learned from the conferences is worth the added effort of attending them, they are not likely to continue using this technology. The electronic bulletin board is likely to suffer the same fate. The media specialist at the high school may send and receive messages on this system, but teachers will be faced with having to relay messages back and forth between the media specialist. Instead of putting teachers in closer contact with colleagues involved in teaching reading, the bulletin board as currently used imposes an additional layer of message handling between sender and receiver.

Local project conditions dictate control, frequency, and convenience of use of technologies. To integrate these technologies fully into a staff development project so as to facilitate two-way communication between the district and outside resources requires careful consideration of local conditions.

POSTSCRIPT

Information presented in this case was gathered through interviews, observations, and review of documents. All individuals involved in the project in Melrose-Mindoro were interviewed at least twice, some more often. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 1 hour. In addition, brief interviews were conducted with teachers not directly involved in the project. Information on district matters (e.g., school budget, enrollment, testing program, and so forth) came from documents provided by the school superintendent and principal.

In mid-May, a draft of this case report was reviewed by all those who participated in the project in the school district. The purpose of their review was to assess the overall credibility of the report, to correct errors in fact, and to comment on the interpretations rendered by the evaluator. As a result of this review, only minor changes were made in the report. Respondents in this evaluation were satisfied with the portrayal as first drafted.

NOTES

1. Mindoro is approximately 16 miles northeast of LaCrosse, a city of 48,000.
2. Alan Peshkin, The Imperfect Union, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p.12.
3. "The Building of a Junior High at Melrose-Mindoro," The Chronicle, Wednesday, April 13, 1988, p.6.
4. Letter to the Editor, The Chronicle, Wednesday, April 6, 1988, p.2.
5. Peshkin, p.161-162.
6. See D. Schon, The Reflective Practitioner, New York: Basic Books and R.E. Stake, "An Evolutionary View of Educational Improvement," in E. House, (ed.), New Directions in Educational Evaluation, Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1986, pp.89-102.
7. Plan of Work for Core Activities of the Regional Laboratory Rural Education Initiative. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Elmhurst, Illinois, June 15, 1987, p.15.

HOW THE TECHNOLOGY WAS USED:
THE WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALMA CENTER-HUMBIRD-MERRILLAN

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Introduction

If you're coming from the south, as I was, you go up Interstate 94 a few miles past Black River Falls, until you get to the Highway 95 exit (if you miss it, you can still get off at the next exit, Highway 121. Taking 95 to the east, you run into Highway 121, take a right, drive a few more miles, and you are in Alma Center. Once you're in town, you'll take a right a few streets down, take another right, and you'll hit the high school, which is attached to an elementary school. If you go by the grocery store, you've gone too far. Alma Center is not a real big town. You probably won't have trouble finding the school, but if you do, just ask: people are more than glad to help.

Once in the school, be ready to have your expectations violated. In the school, in Alma Center, you're going to find a fully networked (Corvus), 23-station microcomputer laboratory. You're also going to find a small classroom, busy with kids taking a course in German, or Accounting, or something else, via a two-way interactive television system. The teacher is in another school, in another town. We're talking fully interactive two-way television, very sophisticated indeed. Stroll the halls, peek in classrooms: you'll find many computers. Check administrative offices: more computers. And remember, you are in Alma Center, population 454. Of course, this school district also serves Merrillan: population 587. And the district serves Humbird, but I don't know its population. This is a district serving maybe 1500 people, but inside, when you look at the technology in place, you guess you're in the suburbs of Minneapolis, or Milwaukee, or Chicago.

Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan school district serves a rural area. Eau Claire is north maybe fifty miles, but that is the closest large city. By almost any definition of rural, this school district is rural. When you talk to the teachers, the parents, the administrators, you hear them say much about the goodness of these communities, the importance of the schools. You also hear them describe the area as rural, and with those descriptions come intimations of conflicts between the values of rural America, and the reality of hard economic times.

It is for just the kind of school district that Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan represents that the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project was intended. In its most simplistic terms, the project is aimed at improving the teaching of reading in rural schools by providing, through a variety of technologies, a sustained inservice program for teachers. The project was born out of the conviction that rural teachers often experience more difficulty than their urban or suburban counterparts in gaining access to quality continuing education opportunities. In the winter in Humbird, or Alma Center, it isn't easy to drive the 50 plus miles to Eau Claire to take a graduate class. With the schedules most rural teachers and administrators keep, it isn't easy to make that drive any time. So the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project aimed to bring good continuing education to the educators in some of Wisconsin's rural schools, in an organized and sustained manner.

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project (let me abbreviate that from here on: WRRIP) was to be evaluated during its first year of operation. Among other activities, the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Policy Studies at Northern Illinois University, the group charged with conducting the evaluation, decided to gather some of its data through case studies. Five of the 18 school districts participating in the WRRIP were selected to serve as sites for the case studies: Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan (let me abbreviate this also: ACHM) was one of the districts selected to be a case study site. I was asked to be the member of the evaluation team that visited ACHM.

It is not by chance that ACHM is a participant in the Project, and a choice to be a case study site. The administrators in ACHM have been aggressive in investigating the uses of technology in their schools. Leadership by the administration, sometimes cautious support from the School Board, and external help from agencies such as the Kellogg Foundation have contributed to making ACHM something of an anomaly among rural schools with regard to technology applications. ACHM took an early and aggressive posture in getting involved with the WRRIP, and seemed a natural site for looking at how the WRRIP actually functioned in this district.

My colleagues conducted their site visits, and wrote their case studies. The styles were different among the case studiers, as one might expect. I chose a very particular, and indeed rather narrow, focus for my case study. I wanted to look not at whether reading scores improved, or whether methods of teaching reading began to change as a result of the WRRIP, or indeed whether teachers actually learned and could demonstrate what the WRRIP was supposed to teach the teachers. All of these matters are of critical importance, and my colleagues, in their four case studies, touched on many of these points. My goal was considerably more modest: I wanted to determine just how the technology of the WRRIP was used, and how the teachers involved in the project felt about those technologies. My observations, and my questions, thus focused narrowly on the issues of how the technology got used, and what people thought of the technology.

What follows is my rendering of what I heard and saw at ACHM, as I looked for how the technology got used. I've chosen to write my findings in a first person format, for I felt my looking into things in ACHM was a rather personal enterprise, and ought to be treated as such.

Let me tell you first just what I did to examine technology use in the WRRIP implementation in ACHM. Then I'll describe to you the technology components included in the Project. After that, I'll share with you want I found, and perhaps what I think it all means.

I would be untrue to my academic background if I didn't offer some obligatory caveats, of course. Anyone reading this account needs to treat the account with some care, because:

> I didn't live in the District for any length of time. You can't really know for sure what went on in the course of a project if you didn't live with it on a regular and long-term basis. I'll never know what went on in ACHM, relevant to the WRRIP, when I was not there.
>
> I always get concerned that we'll draw conclusions too soon in the life of any educational project. The WRRIP in ACHM took time to get rolling. We say the project has been running for a year, but that isn't really accurate. I'd say the real meat of the project probably didn't run for more than five months, if that.
>
> The WRRIP was not the only project going on in ACHM during the year. I'm not able to separate out the effects of the WRRIP from the effects of other projects and other efforts. I don't know anyone who could, but the fact remains that conclusions about the WRRIP need to be made in recognition of other (confounding) things going on.

Given those cautions, let me begin by describing what I did to gather information in ACHM:

What I Did to Gather Information

Early in the life of the WRRIP, a meeting was held in Eau Claire to acquaint project participants with the intents of the project, and with how the technology components of the project were designed to work. I attended that meeting, and got to know some of the people playing key roles in the WRRIP.

Before making my first visit to ACHM, I obtained from Larry Lienau, then the Superintendent of the District, various materials about the District and the communities served by the District. One of the most helpful sources of information was a videotape that had been made about the District. I studied all those materials, and prepared a set of questions I wanted to ask of people in the District. A time for me to visit was arranged, an agenda set, and away I went.

I spent about two and a half days in the schools in the District. I interviewed the Superintendent, the two school principals, the five teachers and resource people directly participating in the project, the media specialist, the President of the school board, and several parents. I spent a good bit of time wandering the halls and the classrooms in the schools. I participated in one of the team's teleconferences. I ate in the cafeteria, met some people in the local grocery store, and generally tried to look around at what was going on. For example, I observed in one of the class sessions using the interactive television system. I stayed at the Arrowhead Lodge in Black River Falls, visited late one night the emergency room at the Black River Falls hospital to get a medication I had forgotten at home, and one night, drove up to Eau Claire. Much of this was familiar, for I grew up in a rural community in northern Minnesota. It was cold when I visited in ACHM in February, like my childhood home, only a tad warmer. Any place is warmer than International Falls.

I took notes on all my interviews, recorded some of my general observations, and waited for a few months to pass. Near the end of the school year, I placed a number of long distance calls back to the people I had interviewed earlier. I interviewed those project teachers again, according to a common interview protocol I had developed. I probed about how the technology use had changed since my visit, and I wondered with the teachers how they felt about the experience, now that Year One was about to end.

Based on all this information, I've formulated some impressions of how the technology aspects of the WRRIP were used in ACHM. But first, let me describe how Project personnel talked about the technology to be used in the Project.

What technology was to be used in the WRRIP?

It sounds like a rather straightforward task to describe the technology elements of the WRRIP, and in many ways it is a relatively easy task. However, I should mention that, from my listening to people in ACHM, and people in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board (operators of the public educational radio and television network), there seems to be some confusion or perhaps disagreement over whether the WRRIP was first and foremost an inservice training project, a reading project, or a technology/distance teaching project. Maybe it doesn't matter too much which is the primary descriptor of the project. My guess is that the project was all three things. The teachers in ACHM weren't too sure which of these things the project was really all about, but that ambiguity didn't seem to matter either. For my purposes, I was interested in gaining some sense as to whether the WRRIP was conceived of as a pilot test of the viability of a particular technology system, whether the technology-based delivery system was incidental to the content purposes of the project, or just what. Whatever the purposes in the minds of the designers of the project, the group at ACHM didn't spend a lot of time trying to split hairs, or wonder about the primacy of purpose behind the WRRIP. But for reasons that may become clearer later in this account, I still had reason to wonder about just what role technology was to play in the project.

What technology? DPI and educational radio and television staff took considerable care in the Eau Claire meeting to describe for teachers and administrators just how the inservice program was to be delivered to the schools, that is, what technology system was to be used as the means of getting content and materials to the eighteen schools. Later in the year, a brochure describing the WRRIP was published. In that brochure, the technology components included in the project were described, as follows:

> **Broadcast television**. Delivers two video series produced by and broadcast on the Wisconsin Public Television Network directly to the classroom or for taping and playback at a later time:
>
> > "Storylords" - reading comprehension strategies for elementary grade students.
> >
> > "Teaching Reading Comprehension" - inservice credit course that introduces teachers to the new reading instruction techniques.
>
> **Narrowcast television**. Delivers live and taped inservice programs for staff development using an existing video delivery system available to some districts and the newer Wisconsin Narrowcast Service, available to others.
>
> **Narrowcast radio**. Delivers live inservice programs for staff development via the state School Radio Service, a closed circuit audio system "piggybacked" on the Wisconsin Public Radio FM signal.
>
> **Computer network**. Facilitates project-wide sharing of information, linking participating school districts and project staff through the "Learning Link, Wisconsin" software programs for computerized, electronic mail and forums (bulletin boards).
>
> **Telephone**. Enables small-group interaction for staff development activities, including follow-up of narrowcast radio and television programming, using the convener conferencing technology of Wisline, telephone conferencing service of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

ACHM was to utilize all of the components described above, with the exception of the narrowcast television component, which involved only a subset of the schools involved in the Project. My focus in the case study of ACHM was to simply find out whether and how these technology components were actually used in ACHM, and how people felt about those components.

How was the WRRIP Technology System used in Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan?

When I arrived at ACHM in early February, project personnel had already gained experience using most of the technology components included in the WRRIP design. Therefore, I set out to determine just how those components had been or were being used in the Project to date. Here is what I found, organized by component:

Broadcast Television

The "Teaching Reading Comprehension" television programs were not viewed by teachers in ACHM directly at the time they were broadcast. The programs were taped off the air, and held for use at the convenience of the teachers. The broadcast characteristic of the television programs was thus treated by staff in ACHM as a means of getting the programs to the school to be taped, and not as a prescheduled individual or group viewing experience directly from broadcast.

When asked how many tapes were viewed, ACHM teachers gave several different answers. One teacher said she had watched 3 tapes by February. Two other teachers said they had watched four or five of the tapes. This information is important to remember in the context of knowing that 14 tapes were produced in the series.

When asked how or when the videotapes were watched, one teacher suggested she saw the tapes only once, but should have looked at them again. She said time was a major problem here. Two other teachers indicated the tapes had been watched in "clumps," that is, several at one sitting. Apparently, all the tapes that were watched were viewed by staff at ACHM within a relatively short period of time. This information was as the situation existed at the time of my visit in February.

When asked a similar question again in June, the teachers suggested they had not watched any additional tapes since February. It appears, then, that the target teachers viewed 4 or 5 of the tapes at most, that those tapes were all viewed within a relatively short span of time in approximately January, and that the tapes were watched in suggested sequence. One of the teachers did say she had watched all the tapes she viewed (3 or 4, she wasn't sure) in one morning. If the design intended for the WRRIP called for tapes to be watched over a longer time span, that design intent was not followed in ACHM.

Storylords programs

ACHM teachers were already using Storylords materials prior to the start of the WRRIP. Two of the teachers continued to use the Storylords programs during this first year of the Project.

The teachers who used the Storylords programs, however, both indicated they had not used the programs as suggested by the Project. I was uncertain as to how the programs were used differently from their intended use, but the teachers were quite emphatic that the use they put the programs to was not what was intended. Nonetheless, the Storylords programs were definitely used.

Narrowcast radio

The narrowcast radio component of the WRRIP, as experienced in ACHM, presented certain problems. At first, ACHM personnel attempted to listen to the broadcasts live, but found reception to be very poor. School personnel were unsure as to why the reception was poor; speculation centered on problems with the antenna. The receiver itself was physically housed in the office of the school psychologist, after having been moved around to about three different locations. When it became clear that the technical problems were not likely to be resolved satisfactorily, a decision was made to tape the broadcasts, for use at a later time. Problems occurred in the taping process, however. In the end, ACHM secured copies of tapes from other sources, and teachers listened to those tapes as a group, and some of the teachers read transcripts of the tapes. The tapes were listened to in the sequence in which they had been broadcast, and at the rate of 1-2/month.

Computer network

In ACHM, the computer network was not functional until very late in the school year. One of the reading coordinators indicated she had used the system on a couple of occasions, primarily to get messages from Madison. The other teachers said they have been given a demonstration of the electronic mail capabilities of the system, but had not used the system at all. The teachers indicated that, if they had messages they wanted sent over the system, they would give those messages to the reading coordinator, rather than use the system directly themselves. It is thus fair to say that the computer network was used very little, and thus had little if any impact on the WRRIP as practiced in ACHM.

Telephone

To use the telephone conferencing system, personnel at ACHM set up microphones and the speaker in a room off the school library. Teachers gathered around several tables. Microphones were within easy reach of each of the teachers.

Some technical problems existed in the use of the system early in the Project. Once those technical connection problems were worked out, the system was used twice a month, for 3-4 months. Teachers report major scheduling problems for using the system. Apparently, the school day and school year schedule at ACHM was somewhat different from the schedules in other schools on the conference system. These school scheduling differences in turn created problems in getting a working conferencing schedule. ACHM teachers tended to come into a conference after the conference had begun. One of the teachers indicated that the technical and scheduling problems seemed to get resolved in about January, but after those problems were dealt with, use of the system dropped off. No explanation for cessation of use of the system was provided.

The above represents ACHM perceptions of how the technology components were used in the District. I report these as perceptions, for not everyone recalled the exact same patterns or frequency of use, perhaps because not everyone in fact used the components in precisely the same way. In summary form, it appears that, in ACHM:

1. The reading comprehension programs were not used directly from broadcast, but were taped for later use. At most, 4-5 tapes were viewed, over a very limited time span. Storylord programs were used, but not, in the judgment of teachers, in the way they were designed to be used.

2. The narrowcast radio component was beset by a variety of technical problems. Tapes of the broadcasts were obtained from other sources, and listened to in groups.

3. The computer network system was essentially not used, certainly not by the individual target teachers.

4. The telephone conferencing system was subject to initial technical difficulties, but was used by project personnel, apparently as intended.

Scheduling presented major problems for ACHM.

In the other eighteen sites in the WRRIP, other teachers were also learning to use the technologies. The other cases studies undertaken as part of the evaluation of the WRRIP contain information about how teachers in the case study sites used the technologies available to them. While it is not customary in a case study such as the present one to include material developed outside the site being studied, in this instance the inclusion of excerpts from a particular document, created by someone outside the ACHM site, seems appropriate. Dr. Marge Wilsman, a key person in the WRRIP (the evaluation specialist from the Wisconsin educational radio and television unit and the person from that unit most involved in the design and implementation of the WRRIP), had an opportunity to review the case studies included in the NIU evaluation. Her response to the case studies was very interesting and very well done. In her analysis, Dr. Wilsman provided some background on the technology components of the WRRIP, background which adds a degree of richness to the previous discussions of technology use at ACHM. I felt a portion of Dr. Wilsman's report should be added to the case study narrative at this point. From Dr. Wilsman:

> Timely delivery and installation of technology. Site participants expected to have the equipment in September, 1987, when the project began, since we began talking to them about the project and equipment in March. However, we could not order equipment till we were sure of funding, which occurred in June.
>
> Broadcast television via the state public television network was used to deliver the television inservice video series "Teaching Reading Comprehension" and the "Storylords" video programs for students. It was the one technology in place so no delivery problems occurred. Sites agreed to provide VCR's and tape the programs. Tapes of programs missed were supplied by Judy Aakre or myself.
>
> SCA Narrowcast radio receivers were delivered to districts in August, 1987. In April, 1988, installation problems related to antennas and tape

recording equipment still exist. SCA radios are special receivers that contain crystals which are "tuned" to a particular FM frequency. The side band on the FM frequency which is used to deliver stereo programming also carries the SCA signal. Each site was given a receiver that is "tuned" to their nearest FM public radio station. Six receivers had to be exchanged. Two had broken crystals. Four districts needed a different FM frequency. These exchanges were done by October. But unanticipated problems existed.

Districts agreed to purchase and install FM antennas, when needed. THe project staff did not anticipate the detailed kinds of information sites needed to determine (a) if installing an antenna would improve reception or (2) whether or not their existing antenna was working. For example, some sites had antennas with twin-lead cable that lost the signal rather than improving it. In another site, an antenna having the correct coaxial cable was located next to a steel beam that absorbed the signal. One site had a properly located antenna with coaxial cable, but up on the roof the cable was disconnected from the antenna. Schools needed to locate or purchase audio tape recording equipment that has an "audio-in" jack. Schools were using the microphone jack to connect the SCA receiver and the tape recorder. This jack weakens or loses the signal.

In September the Wisconsin Public Radion and Television Networks broadcast two test SCA radio programs. We expected districts to use this time to assess whether or not they needed an antenna or to determine the effectiveness of their existing antenna and recorder. After four months of unsolved reception problems we repeated this activity in January. This time we sent tapes for districts to record the two test programs. Fourteen of the eighteen districts returned tapes. These were analyzed to determine which of the two factors (antenna or recorder) was affecting reception. On January 25, 1988, a conference phone call was held with the media specialists in order to provide them with detailed information on ways to improve their reception. In retrospect, the January activity could have been done in August if we had anticipated the problem.

Three other events which were beyond the control of the sites contributed to the reception difficulties: (1) a January snow storm blew out the transmission tower in LaCrosse; (2) the splitting of the FM signal into tow signals in the Wausau area; and (3) the networks new use of the SCA signal to remote-control television switching equipment. The problems caused by these events have been corrected, but while they existed, there was confusion in resolving the reception difficulties.

Computer modems were to be provided to each site in order to use electronic mail and forums. Elaine Anderson negotiated with Apple Computer, who donated half of the modems, which arrived in October. However, each site needed a super serial card which had to be ordered along with the rest of the modems. There was a delay in the purchase request because DPI administrative data processing did not understand why we were buying Apple super serial cards and Apple modems rather then their "approved" kind. The cards and other modems arrived in February. Immediately, but when weather permitted, Judy Aakre began visiting sites to install the computer equipment. At that time she found, after much trouble shooting, that one super serial card and one modem cable were broken.

An unexpected change in the computer bulletin board we planned to use caused further installation problems. We were using the bulletin board run by Wisconsin Public Television, "Tele-E-Net." While we knew that the network was experimenting with a new board, "Learning Link," we also knew that they had promised to keep both boards operating in 1987-88. We planned to use the old system since the new one could take a long time to get operational. In

August we gave each site software to use with "Tele-E-Net." So in Novermber when the network decided to eliminate "Tele-E-Net," new software had to be found and purchased for each site. Lots of time was spent locating new software, and getting it to interace with the bulletin board, which did have lots of installation problems, or "bugs."

Sites agreed to install the direct access phone lines needed for the electronic mail. In February when Judy was able to visit, four sites still did not have these lines installed.

Although each district received special training from Judy Aakre on how to access and use "Learning Link" after she leaves their school, Judy has trouble in responding because she is not sure if the access problems are due to faculty equipment or inexperience. She needs a complete extra set of equipment that she can exchange with schools while she tests their existing equipment. It is now May 1st and Granton still does not have the correct computer equipment, because Judy is missing a super serial card cable. If Judy had a complete extra set she could give it to them temporarily.

Telephone conferencing equipment. We decided to wait for the availability of new two-wire, four-wire equipment that would permit schools to use it

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in any phone jack. Also, for the same price as the older equipment, we could purchase for schools three rather than one microphone, and a carrying case.

The new equipment was not ready in September. The purchase request for the equipment was delayed because the Wisconsin Department of Administration insisted that the equipment be put out to bid. The equipment did not arrive until January, 1988. In Bruce, the most northern site, the phone lines are too weak to support the new equipment. We hear cross-talk during conference calls. In Athens, there is an installation problem related to the COM Dial phone system the district purchased, which may not be wired correctly. A representative of the vendor, JEP Systems, is working with Athens. The vendor has requested a recall of all equipment in June because the four wire is not working correctly. At this time there also will be installed in five sets, a "modulating switch," which is needed at the sites where the equipment is used with television.

The project staff decided to wait until the telephone conferencing equipment and computer equipment arrived, so Judy could install then simultaneously. The equipment was finally available in early February, when travel in northern Wisconsin is at its worst.

This analysis by Dr. Wilsman portrays in very direct ways the complexities and frustrations involved in trying to get a large scale technology system established, and helps explain some of the technical difficulties experienced in ACHM during the first year.

HOW DID ACHM TEACHERS FEEL ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY COMPONENTS IN THE WRRIP?

In addition to documenting how the technology components got used in a physical sense in the Project in ACHM, I also wanted to get a sense of how the teachers felt about those components. To get at that kind of assessment, I asked teachers to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each of the components, and then asked teachers to give me a rating of each technology component. Here is what the teachers said:

Broadcast television

In February, when asked their assessment of the Teaching Reading Comprehension videotapes, teachers were very positive. The material in the tapes was considered useful, filled with many good ideas, etc. Several teachers indicated they thought several of the tapes moved too fast, but, in general, reactions were very positive: production values were good, examples were good, relevance to daily practice was good.

In June, I asked again for teachers' assessments of the videotapes. None of the teachers had watched any additional tapes since I had interviewed the teachers in February. On reflection, teachers continued to judge the videotapes favorably. When asked to rate the tapes on an effectiveness scale, with 1 being very ineffective in terms of what the tapes tried to teach, and 10 being very effective, two of the teachers rated the tapes a 9, while the three others rated the tapes an 8. When asked about the usability of the tapes, that is, the extent to which the videotapes were easily or feasibly used by the teachers in the school, with 1 being not at all usable, and 10 being very usable, four of the teachers rated the tapes a 9, while the fifth teacher indicated a 5 on the usability scale. I asked this question to get the teachers' assessment as to whether the tapes seemed to be a feasible form of getting information/training to the teachers.

I also asked teachers to rate the tapes on a desirability scale. I wanted to know if the teachers found the videotapes to be an attractive, or desirable, way to get information or training. Two of the teachers gave the videotapes a 6 rating (with 10 being the most desirable rating); two teachers graded the tapes an 8, and one teacher gave the tapes a rating of 9 on the desirability scale.

When asked for suggestions for improving the videotapes, I received no suggestions, other than a request that programs be made for use at grades 7-12. The videotapes, in sum, were very well regarded by teachers at ACHM. As to why only 4-5 of the tapes were used, no explanations were given. Teachers said only that the way they viewed the tapes (clumping) may not have been the best way to proceed, and that perhaps they should have viewed some of the tapes more than once.

Storylords

In the eyes of the teachers (3 of whom used the materials), Storylords is a success story. On all three scales mentioned above, Storylords received ratings of 9 and 10. When asked why, teachers said the materials were interesting to the children, that they were filled with action, that the tapes tied in well with the teaching strategies teachers were learning. Weaknesses? None reported. Request? Make more of these tapes! Not much more need be said, at least in the view of the ACHM teachers.

Narrowcast radio

In February, teachers talked about two things regarding the narrowcast radio components: First, they described the technical difficulties associated with hearing the broadcasts, and the resulting frustrations. But second, having gotten the audio recordings of the radio broadcasts, teachers described the content of the radio component as important, essential, useful. Teachers described the audio tapes as being of particular importance when used with the readings sent by the State. In February, there was consensus that the substance of the radio broadcasts was a vital part of the overall training program.

In June, teachers seemed a bit less sure about the value of the audio tapes. Some of the perceptions as stated to me were:

- Some of the tapes spent too much time on too few topics;
- The tapes were not very motivating; they were far too slow and boring;
- Tapes were difficult to follow; terminology was often unclear;
- Tapes tried to cover too much in one sitting;
- Study guides are needed to help us through the tapes; we came to the tapes cold;
- Tapes were OK if you could listen to them over and over.

When asked to rate the audio components of the WRRIP on the three scales, three teachers gave a rating of 4 on the effectiveness scale, with the other two teachers giving ratings of 5 and 7. On the usability scale, ratings were 3,3,7,5, and 4. On desirability, two teachers rated the audio tapes an 3, two teachers a 6, and the fifth teacher gave a rating of 5.

Telephone

The teleconferencing component also elicited mixed responses from teachers in ACHM. On the positive side, teachers liked very much the opportunity to share ideas with other teachers. One teacher said that the teleconferences made her feel she was not alone in trying to learn this new approach to reading. Other teachers in ACHM liked the idea of not only sharing success stories, but also being able to alert each other to things tried that did not work. Also, several teachers liked the teleconferences as a way of getting to know consultants and personnel from the DPI and Wisconsin radio and television.

On the down side, teachers at ACHM felt that the teleconferences tended to be dominated a bit too much by discussion leaders, and a few teachers. The level of teacher-to-teacher interchange was not as high as some would have liked. One teacher indicated that the conversations often rambled, or dropped off into somewhat meaningless dialogue (or monologue). Too much time was spent on some of the teaching strategies, one teacher felt; far too much repetition on a few obvious points.

Most of the teachers at ACHM would have liked more structure in the telephone conferences. When asked if the readings helped provide a structure, teachers indicated that, in some instances, the readings did help, but that the readings themselves were often not very well organized, and that the teleconferences did little to help with the readings. Later in the year, however, the readings arrived with more organization and structure, and when that occurred the teleconferences also took on more structure, and were useful.

Several of the ACHM teachers indicated they would like to have had more of the teleconferences, and that the time between receipt of readings and a teleconference about those readings should be shorter.

On the effectiveness scale, two teachers gave a 3 rating, one teacher a rating of 8, and two teachers a rating of 6. On usability, the ratings were the same as for effectiveness. On desirability, two of the teachers gave the teleconference a rating of 8, one teacher a rating of 7, and other two teachers rated the teleconference a 3. It should also be noted that several teachers felt the times of the teleconferences (after school) were not good, as teachers were already exhausted from a long day, and couldn't really concentrate as well as they might.

Since teachers essentially did not use the computer network, no data are presented here about that technology component.

I wanted to obtain some perspectives on how the teachers in Alma Center-Humbird-Merillan viewed their experience with the WRRIP overall, and their general sense of the technology components of the project. Therefore, in June I asked teachers if, in their judgment, they could have received the kind and amount of inservice education provided in the WRRIP without the technology components involved in the project. Each of the teachers seemed to think a good bit about this question before answering. Four of the teachers said they felt the technology aspect of the project was essential, that the kind of information made available to them through the various technology components simply would not have been available in any other way. One teacher disagreed, saying she felt she could have obtained the information in other ways, possibly through courses at the university. For the most part, teachers felt that the technology system present in the WRRIP was a necessary element in the overall plan for improving reading strategies.

When asked if they would like to see the WRRIP continued for another year, and whether they would participate and recommend other teachers also participate, four of the five teachers responded in the affirmative, indicating they felt this year's experience was very valuable, and ought to be continued. The fifth teacher expressed mixed feelings, not altogether positive but certainly not altogether negative about the experience of this year, or about continuing.

Some Observations from the Evaluator

Based on what I saw and heard in Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan School District, I draw some conclusions, or at least offer some observations, about technology use in the WRRIP in ACHM. These are my own reflections on what I observed, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or perspectives of the teachers and administrators in ACHM.

1. Most people underestimate the time needed to gear up any new effort involving technologies. Whatever else one might say about technology applications in education, things always take longer to plug in, design, implement, and support than initially planned. It is far too soon to make definitive judgments as to whether the WRRIP was a great success or a great failure, or something in between. More experience with the system is needed before such judgments are responsibly rendered. About all I would be willing to say about the technology components thus far is that some of them seemed to "work"

just fine, while other parts of the system need some adjusting. Such a finding is neither bold nor unexpected at this stage in any technology-based project (if indeed the various stakeholders could agree that the WRRIP is at least in part a technology-based project). There is certainly not, in my judgment, sufficient evidence to suggest that the whole idea was a bad one, or that the WRRIP ought to be terminated immediately. On the contrary, the idea of providing a sustained continuing professional education program to teachers in rural schools, using combinations of technologies, seems to hold up reasonably well to first year scrutiny.

2. One of the major factors impinging on the success of the WRRIP is time. Teachers in ACHM spoke often about the pressures of time, or, more precisely, the lack of adequate amounts of time to learn what was presented to them in the project. This issue must be confronted squarely in ACHM, and, I suspect, in any other school district wishing to participate in the WRRIP or its equivalent. Learning new skills and ideas in general takes time: for initial exposure, for working with the ideas, for reflection. Technology-based delivery systems do not simplify or eliminate the need for learning and reflection time. If anything, technology systems may actually increase the time necessary to learn and to apply what has been learned. ACHM staff either were not given enough time, or they did not use the time they had to best advantage. I suggest the teachers were not given enough time in this case. Learning new approaches to teaching reading was another burden (albeit an opportunity as well) on teachers whose days are already crowded. There is no magic here, just a need for time to concentrate on what is to be learned.

3. While the readings and other print materials made available to teachers in the WRRIP are seldom if ever explicitly mentioned in discussions of the project as a technology project, those print materials were, in my judgment, a very critical part of the overall WRRIP. In my judgment, much more care must be taken to make the print materials usable by teachers. The kinds of organized study guides that began to appear later in the year were important improvements in the Project. The success or lack thereof of some of the electronic technology components (the teleconferencing, for example) was profoundly influenced by the nature and organization of the print materials related to each conference. In next rounds of the WRRIP, I hope more attention is paid as to how best to organize and present the print materials.

4. It is important to draw a distinction between what a technology component might do, and how it was actually used. There is a tendency to judge a technology not on its capacities, but on how people at a given point in time have chosen to use the technology in question. The technology components included in this first year version of the WRRIP are, in my estimation, capable of delivering innovative, exciting, and stimulating programming for teachers and students alike. The package of technology components assembled for use in the WRRIP is not on the cutting edge of technological development. but neither is the package hopelessly outdated and incapable of anything very interesting. To date, at least in ACHM, the instructional capacities of the technologies involved have not been tested to their limits. As experience is gained with the WRRIP, I would look to new uses for the components, creative new ways of involving teachers in their continuing education. What we have here is

the first year of what ought to be viewed as a long term and evolutionary effort to use technologies to provide services to teachers and administrators who might, under other conditions, simply not have access to such services. I am not worried about choice made of which technologies to use, nor am I disappointed in what ACHM did to use the system. I do feel, however, that considerably more and interesting things are possible. It is a matter of deciding to explore new options, having time to do same, and, very importantly, having the enthusiastic and involved endorsement of the school district administration to explore the frontiers of technology applications.

In this regard, ACHM seems uniquely positioned to take a strong lead in exploring technology frontiers. There is, after all, a history of such exploration in this District. There are teachers and administrators who seem interested and willing to take some chances. The technology system was underutilized in Year One of the WRRIP; this is to be expected and tolerated. Year Two could be more innovative, more daring: the conditions will need to be right, however. Time must be allocated, plans must be drawn, partnerships built.

As I reflect on these observations, I cannot fail to notice that I have documented "how the technology was used" in a rather narrow sense. I've talked about what was used, with what frequency, and in what sequence. I've said a few things about what teachers thought of the technology system with which they interacted over the year. But I have not been able to describe how the technology system was used in another, perhaps deeper sense. I do not know how the technology of the WRRIP did or did not shape the view teachers have of their students, or of the teaching strategies the teachers are or have been using. I do not know how each teacher changed how he or she carries on in his or her classroom on a daily basis. I do not know how teachers now view their future as teachers. These are important questions; perhaps the WRRIP had no influence on any of these important matters, or perhaps the experience of involvement with the WRRIP dramatically and irrevocably changed the way teachers in ACHM conduct their tasks. I simply cannot say, based on the information I gathered during this first year. In subsequent years, if the WRRIP continues, these fundamental questions should be addressed.

As of this moment, I conclude that in ACHM the technology system served the purposes intended to a reasonable degree for the first year of a complicated project. Based on the implementation of the WRRIP in ACHM, there is reason to be optimistic, reason to continue to pursue the use of technologies to provide continuing professional education to teachers in rural schools.

Highlights of Fall Survey
Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project

One hundred and twenty-one (121) questionnaires were distributed in October 1987, to 48 target teachers, 37 comparison teachers, 19 reading specialists and 17 administrators. The response rate was 100%. Results indicate the following:

1. Most of the 85 teachers taught and teach 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 grades. Most target teachers (78%) teach 3rd or 4th grade. Comparison teachers are spread out fairly equally across grades 3-6. Teachers have an average of 15 years experience, nine at their present grade level, and most have been in their present schools about 11 years.

2. In judging students, there is no significant difference among target and comparison teachers and administrators. These groups rate about 40% of their students good and 42% average readers. Reading specialists, however, judge a mean of 47.6% to be poor readers, while teachers and administrators judge much less, about 20%, to be poor readers.

3. Most respondents consider comprehension, word problems and general reading problems the three most common problems poor readers have. There is no significant difference between target and comparison teachers in their analysis or ranking of reading problems.

4. Basal programs used most often are Ginn, Lippincot, Scott Foresman and Macmillan and the mean percent of instruction time based on Basal is 78% (total teachers), 77% (target) and 80% (comparison). Non-basal approaches used are many (over 70 different answers), though the mean percent of instruction using these approaches is relatively small--about 16%. Target teachers report using more non-basal approaches than do comparison teachers, and their percentage of instruction time based on non-basal approaches is slightly greater (17% vs 15%).

5. There is a substantial difference in the time target and comparison teachers report spending on reading instruction per day. Target teachers report a mean of 3.9 hours while comparison teachers report a mean of 2.9 hours.

6. Most of the reading instruction time students spend grouped as a class (about 43%) or in small groups (about 28%). If students are grouped, most often they are grouped by "ability".

7. Regarding the question, "how much time do you spend on reading instruction with teachers, reading specialists, etc.," many teachers did not respond. Those who did usually spend one hour or less a week working with others. Some spend five minutes. The least time spent was with librarians. (Some indicated they had no librarians.)

8. Educational background of the subjects.
   a. 87% of teachers have a BA or BS degree. Only 10 teachers (12%) hold a masters level degree, however 90% of reading specialists and administrators hold a masters level degree and there is also one Ed.D.
   b. Most degrees were obtained from Wisconsin colleges --over 40% from UW Eau Claire.
   c. The years degrees were obtained ranged from 1950-1987 with 40-50% of teachers completing their degrees about 10-15 years ago.

9. Over half of the teachers and specialists reported they had not taken any reading-related courses or participated in any staff development activities during the past two years. Those who have taken reading related courses did so in UW colleges. Coursework taken was general theory or methods courses (13%), or specific skill/methods courses (7.1%). Professional development activities were most often yes in the form of conferences (13%), inservices (7%) or workshops (9%) for the 50% of teachers who reported taking part in staff development. Administrators reported seldomly taking or participating in coursework or staff development.

10. Most of the teachers (87%) are not members of the Wisconsin Reading Association, 68.4% of reading specialists are, but no administrators belong.

11. About 30 differences between good and poor readers are mentioned by teachers. The most common ones include comprehension, word/vocabulary skills, affective skills, cognitive ability, metacognition, reading characteristics and use of strategy. While many mentioned comprehension among teachers (40%) and administrators (53%) as the first difference, only 11% of reading specialists used this descriptor.

12. The hardest part of supervising, as agreed to by many teachers is "lack of time". Many also mentioned "lack of experience" and "lack of expertise". Respondents mentioned over 20 different challenges in teaching. Those mentioned most commonly include "lack of time", "specific instructional process", "accommodating student cognitive and affective problems" and "teaching different groups". There is no pattern of differences between target and comparison teachers.

13. Most respondents prefer to spend more time in the future on staff development: target teachers (63%), comparison teachers (60%), specialists (84%), and administrators (65%). And the strategy they most prefer is workshop.

14. In answering the many questions about knowledge, attitude and behavior concerning reading instruction and staff development, most respondents follow the same pattern; that is, most of them respond similarly to the same question. However, the specialists and the target teachers seem more resolute than the administrators and comparison teachers (fall toward the ends of the scale). For example, while most respondents strongly disagree with "attention to text information organization not important," the mean of specialists is 1.11, and target teachers is 1.27. However, the mean of comparison teachers is 1.87 and that of administrators is 1.62. (On a scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.) On the same scale, to the question "the reading program in our school needs staff development", the mean of specialists is 4.47, that of target teachers is 3.74, that of comparison teachers is 3.36 and that of administrators is 3.73. Review of reading instruction items reveals great agreement across teachers and reading specialists with all respondents reflecting agreement with principles driving strategic reading ideology. In other words, respondents picked the "right" answers. This could mean that current reading philosophy is familiar to both groups of rural education teachers, or that the items were self evident and did not discriminate, or both.

15. Staff development items indicate relatively positive views about the quality and usefulness of staff development across each group. Coursework and worskshops are the most frequent type of staff development, though almost 50% of teachers have had little or no staff development in the last two years.

FALL SURVEY RESULTS
WISCONSIN READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT I

Part I Descriptive Information

		Total	Target Group	Comparison Group
1. Grade taught this year:	3 -	28 (32.9)	22 (45.8)	6 (16.2)
	4 -	17 (20)	12 (25.0)	5 (13.5)
	2 -	10 (11.8)	3 (6.3)	7 (18.9)
	K-5 -	9 (10.6)	3 (6.3)	6 (16.2)
	K-6 -	9 (10.6)	3 (6.3)	6 (16.2)
	1 -	4 (4.7)	1 (2.1)	3 (8.1)
	5/6 -	2 (2.4)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.7)
	5,6,7,8 -	2 (2.4)	0	2 (5.4)
	1-4 -	1 (1.2)	0	1 (2.7)
	other -	3 (3.5)	3 (6.3)	0
	Total -	85 (100)	48 (100)	37 (100)
Last Year:	3 -	21 (24.7)	17 (35.4)	4 (10.8)
	4 -	20 (23.5)	13 (27.1)	7 (18.9)
	2 -	11 (12.9)	5 (10.4)	6 (16.2)
	K-5 -	8 (9.4)	4 (8.3)	4 (10.8)
	K-6 -	8 (9.4)	3 (6.3)	5 (13.5)
	1 -	3 (3.5)	1 (2.1)	2 (5.4)
	5/6 -	3 (3.5)	0	3 (8.1)
	1-3 -	1 (1.2)	0	1 (2.7)
	5,6,7,8 -	2 (2.4)	0	2 (5.4)
	3+4 -	1 (1.2)	1 (2.1)	0
	other -	3 (3.5)	2 (4.2)	1 (2.7)
	none -	1 (1.2)	1 (2.1)	0
	No response -	3 (3.5)	1 (2.1)	2 (5.4)
	Total -	85 (100)	48 (100)	37 (100)
2. Mean percentage of last year's students judged to be:				
	good readers -	40.3	40.9	39.6
	average readers -	42.7	42.1	43.5
	poor readers -	22.3	20.8	24.1
3. Three most common reading problems of poor readers last year:				
First problem identified:	comprehension -	38%	38%	38%
	word problems -	31	29	32
	affective problems -	6	8	3

	Total	Target	Comparison
Second problem:			
word problems -	31%	35%	31%
comprehension -	18	17	18
general reading problem -	9	10	9
Third problem:			
word problems -	22	19	22
metacognition -	11	13	11
comprehension -	8	6	8

(definition of problems, see appendix 1)

	Total	Target	Comparison
4. a. Percent of teachers who used basal reader last year:			
Ginn -	20%	19%	22%
Lippincott -	17	21	11
Scott Foresman -	13	17	8
Macmillan -	11	10	11
Harcourt Brace -	7	6	8
Laidlow -	7	6	8
Economy -	6	6	5
Harper & Row -	5	2	8
b. Mean percent of reading instruction based on basal	78	77	80
5. a. Percent of teachers mentioning use of non-basal approaches:			
commercial reading -	20	23	16
books by genre -	19	21	16
vocabulary identification -	17	24	11
Storylords -	7	6	8
organizational approach -	6	8	3
teacher's own materials -	5	4	5
language arts	5	2	8
media/print -	4	4	3
AV materials -	4	2	5
no answer -	12	13	14
b. Mean percent of instruction using a non-basal approach:	15	17	14
c. Percent of teachers mentioning use of a second nonbasal approach:			
books by genre -	13	13	13
teacher's own materials -	7	8	5
commercial reading -	6	4	8
media/print -	5	6	3
content area -	5	8	0
vocabulary identification -	4	2	3
no response -	45	40	51

	Total	Target	Comparison
d. Mean percent of instruction using a second non-basal approach: (definition of approaches see appendix 2)	12	14	9
6. Mean hours per/day spent teaching reading.	3.4	3.9	2.9
7. Mean percent of instruction time students spent:			
as a class -	42.8	42.5	42.2
in small groups -	27.7	27.4	28
in pairs -	10.8	12	9.4
alone -	27.5	28.3	26.5
8. Mean number of reading groups used:	2.6	2.5	2.7
9. How reading groups were formed (freq.):			
by ability -	56	31	25
by interest -	3	1	2
by test score -	2	1	1
no response -	19	12	7
10. a. Mean hours spent weekly preparing to teach.	9.4	8.4	10.8
b. Mean percent of total time spent weekly preparing to teach reading.	36.4%	35.9%	37.1%
11. Average minutes spent per week last year on reading instruction with:			
other teacher -	68(33)*	61(20)	82(13)
reading specialists -	47(44)	47(24)	46(20)
librarian -	39(41)	33(22)	47(19)
administrator -	34(66)	32(30)	35(36)
teacher aides -	63(63)	37(34)	109(29)
parent -	45(60)	44(29)	46(31)

*Number of persons not responding

	Total	Target	Comparison
12. a. Education degree received:			
BS -	75%	73%	78%
BA -	19	21	16
MS -	1	2	0
Other -	5	4	6
b. Degree major:			
Elementary Education -	86%	83%	89%
Special Education -	4	4	3
Education -	4	6	0
Other -	6	7	8

	Total	Target	Comparison
c. College attended for first degree:			
UW - Stevens Point -	26%	27%	24%
UW - Superior -	1	2	0
UW - EAU Claire	33	33	32
UW - LaCrosse -	12	10	14
UW - White Water -	1	0	3
UW - Platteville -	2	2	3
UW - Madison -	1	0	3
UW - River Fall -	8	8	8
Other -	15	17	14

d. Year completing first degree:	Total	Target	Comparison
1950-1955 -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)
1956-1960 -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)
1961-1965 -	7(8.3)	5(10.5)	2(5.4)
1966-1970 -	18(21.2)	10(20.9)	8(21.6)
1971-1975 -	29(24.1)	18(37.6)	11(29.7)
1976-1980 -	6(7.1)	2(4.2)	4(10.8)
1981-1985 -	14(15.3)	7(12.6)	7(18.9)
1986-1987 -	6(7.1)	4(8.4)	2(5.4)
Missing -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)
Total -	85(100)	48(100)	37(100)

e. Percent of teachers with second education degree:			
BS -	3.5%	4.2%	2.7%
BA -	1.2	0	2.7
MA -	1.2	2.1	0
MS -	8.2	4.2	13.5
Other -	7.1	6.3	8.1
No response -	78.8	83	73

f. College attended for second degree:			
UW - Stevens Point -	22.2%	50%	0%
UW - Eau Claire -	33.3	25	40
UW - LaCrosse -	16.7	12.5	20
UW - Platteville -	5.6	0	10
UW - River Fall -	5.6	0	10
Other -	16.7	12.5	20

g. Year completing second degree:	Number and Valid Percentage		
1970-1975 -	5(31.3)	2(28.6)	2(33.3)
1976-1980 -	1(6.3)	0	1(11.1)
1981-1985 -	7(43.9)	3(42.9)	4(44.4)
1986-1987 -	3(18.8)	2(28.6)	1(11.1)
Total -	16(100)	7(100)	8(100)

	Total	Target	Comparison
13. a. Number and percent of first-listed reading-related coursework taken during past two years:			
General theory/method -	11(12.9)	8(16.7)	3(8.1)
Specific skill/method -	6(7.1)	1(2.1)	5(13.5)
Focus on student -	2(2.4)	2(4.2)	0
Assess/Diagnosis -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Language arts -	2(2.4)	2(4.2)	0
Computer reading -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)
Thinking skill -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)
Foundation -	6(7.1)	4(8.3)	2(5.4)
Computer -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)
Other -	2(2.4)	2(4.2)	0
No response -	48(56.5)	24(50)	24(64.9)
Total -	85(100)	48(100)	37(100)
b. Sites where courses were taken:			
UW - Stevens Point -	13.5%	12.5%	15.4%
UW - Superior -	8.1	8.3	7.7
UW - Eau Claire -	43.2	45.8	38.5
UW - LaCrosse -	13.5	12.5	15.4
UW - Stout -	2.7	0	7.7
UW - Madison -	2.7	0	7.7
Other -	16.2	20	7.7
c. Number and percent of second-listed reading-related coursework taken during the past two years.			
General theory/method -	4(4.7)	3(6.3)	1(2.7)
Specific skill/method -	4(4.7)	2(4.2)	2(5.4)
Focus on student -	3(3.5)	1(2.1)	2(5.4)
Assess/diagnosis -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Language Arts -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)
Computer reading -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Foundation -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)
Science -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Computer -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Other -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
No response -	65(76.5)	35(72.9)	30(81.1)
d. Sites where second courses were taken:			
UW - Stevens Point -	10%	15.4%	0%
UW - Superior -	10	7.7	14.3
UW - Eau Claire -	55	53.8	57.1
UW - Lacrosse -	15	15.4	14.3
UW - Madison -	5	0	14.3
Other -	5	7.7	0

	Total	Target	Comparison
14. a. Number and percent of professional development activities participated in during the past two years:			
Conference/convention -	11(12.9)	8(16.7)	3(8.1)
Inservice -	6(7.1)	3(6.3)	3(8.1)
Workshop -	8(9.4)	3(6.3)	5(13.5)
Sharing time -	1(1.20	1(2.1)	0
Storylord video -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Reading program -	4(4.7)	1(2.1)	3(8.1)
Reading through literature -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Presentation -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Project access -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Cognitive teaching -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Other -	7(8.2)	5(10.4)	2(5.4)
No response -	43(50.6)	22(45.8)	21(56.8)
b. Valid percentage of activities in institutions:			
LaCrosse -	17.6	16.7	20
CESA -	2.9	0	10
Olympia -	2.9	4.2	0
Own school -	2.9	0	10
Local -	14.7	12.5	20
Eleva-strum -	2.9	0	10
NWEA -	5.9	0	20
Eau Claire -	8.8	12.5	0
Stevens Point -	2.9	4.2	0
Wausau -	2.9	4.2	0
Occonomowac -	5.9	4.2	10
Superior -	2.9	4.2	0
Other -	26.9	37.5	0

c. Time span of activities ranges from one hour to two years. The mode (10 counts) is one day. Fifty-six teachers (66%) did not respond to 14a & 14b.

	Total	Target	Comparison
15. a. Member of Wisconsin State Reading Association:		Number and Percent	
Yes -	11(12.9)	9(18.8)	2(5.4)
No -	64(75.3)	37(77.1)	27(73)
No response -	10(11.8)	2(4.2)	8(21.6)
b. If members, mean years as a member:	3.2	3.2	3.5
16. Mean number of years of:			
a. being a teacher -	15	15.9	14.2
b. teaching elementary grades -	14	15.8	13
c. teaching present grade -	9.7	10.4	8.9
d. teaching in present school -	11.7	12.5	10.8

Part II Reading instructional knowledge, attitudes and behavior

Value labels for questions 17-22: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree.

A. Reading	Mean				
	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
17. Best way to read a test.	2.45	2.50	2.38	3.12	2.27
18. Same questions cannot be answered by looking in text.	3.99	4.11	3.83	4.72	3.78
19. Good readers have the same comprehension problems.	1.63	1.51	1.78	1.61	2.00
20. Thinking about topic before reading causes confusion.	1.37	1.21	1.58	1.17	1.60
21. Attention to text information organization not important.	1.53	1.27	1.87	1.11	1.63
22. Remarks ranked by importance of 1-4:					
a. finding meaning in text	2.62	2.66	2.56	2.79	2.41
b. connecting reading with knowledge	2.04	1.84	2.29	1.67	1.82
c. understanding words/ sentences	2.80	2.93	2.63	3.29	3.00
d. making meaning	2.44	2.50	2.36	2.21	2.88

23. a. First difference between good and poor readers:		Number and Percent	
Affect -	12(14.1)	6(12.5)	6(16.2)
Fluency -	5(5.9)	2(4.2)	3(8.1)
Comprehension -	34(40)	20(41.7)	14(37.8)
Word/Vocabulary -	7(8.2)	4(8.3)	3(8.1)
Use of Strategy -	4(4.7)	2(4.2)	2(5.4)
Metacognition -	6(7.1)	5(10.4)	1(2.7)
Reasoning -	3(3.5)	1(2.1)	2(5.4)
Reading characteristics -	7(8.2)	5(10.4)	2(5.4)
Decoding Skill -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.1)
Amount of reading -	3(3.5)	1(2.1)	2(5.4)
Other -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.1)

b. Second difference between good and poor readers:	Number and Percent		
Affect -	14(16.5)	9(18.8)	5(13.5)
Fluency -	2(2.4)	2(4.2)	0
Comprehension -	16(18.8)	7(14.6)	9(24.3)
Word/vocabulary -	10(11.8)	5(10.4)	5(13.5)
Use of strategy -	4(4.7)	3(6.3)	1(2.7)
Metacognition -	5(5.9)	4(8.3)	1(2.7)
Reasoning -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)
Reading characteristics -	11(12.9)	6(12.5)	5(13.5)
Decoding skill -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)
Amount of Reading -	2(2.4)	0	2(5.4)
Other -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
No response -	14(16.5)	7(14.6)	7(18.9)

(definition of differences, see appendix 3)

Value labels for questions 24-31: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree.

B. Reading Instruction

	Mean				
	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
24. Decoding skills should be taught before comp. skills.	1.86	1.77	1.97	1.61	2.50
25. Reading strategy hierarchy drives teaching sequence.	3.68	3.71	3.63	3.06	3.58
26. Teaching strategy involves knowing when and why to use.	4.19	4.35	3.97	4.84	4.00
27. Reading instruction for poor readers focuses on decoding skills.	2.14	1.77	2.62	1.68	2.47
28. Recognizing and solving comp. problem are crucial.	4.50	4.56	4.43	4.90	4.00
29. Incorporating with other area is confusing.	1.48	1.34	1.65	1.37	1.53
30. Reading and writing instruction should be separated.	1.27	1.21	1.35	1.11	1.14
31. Basal reading programs do a good job.	3.27	3.19	3.38	2.79	3.27

Value labels for questions 32-51: 1=unimportant; 2=not important; 3=important; 4=very important; 5=essential.

Reading Instruction	Mean				
	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
32. Previewing text features before reading.	3.82	3.94	3.68	4.47	3.63
33. Comparing text to readers' previous knowledge.	4.06	4.30	3.74	4.26	3.73
34. Scanning text for easy words.	2.10	2.09	2.11	2.00	2.13
35. Developing plans for reading text.	3.70	3.89	3.44	4.50	3.93
36. Skimming first and last sentences before reading.	2.57	2.60	2.42	3.35	2.53
37. Making predictions and confirming hypothesis.	3.60	3.68	3.50	4.42	3.44
38. Paraphrasing what is read.	3.66	3.70	3.60	4.16	3.80
39. Reading for word meaning.	3.57	3.60	3.51	3.58	3.20
40. Fixing problems with text meaning.	3.48	3.68	3.28	4.14	3.39
41. Locating right answers in text.	3.50	3.71	3.24	3.11	2.44
42. Semantic mapping.	3.48	3.77	3.07	3.89	3.07
43. Whole class instruction.	3.49	3.56	3.41	3.83	3.07
44. Student/teacher interviews.	3.22	3.07	3.44	5.59	3.33
45. Round robin reading.	2.44	2.33	2.58	1.89	2.79
46. Directing reading thinking activity.	4.04	4.17	3.87	4.44	4.00
47. Directed reading activity.	3.71	3.88	3.49	4.11	3.67
48. Skill/strategy practice on text of similar complexity.	3.61	3.80	3.36	4.00	3.53
49. Independent skills/strategy exercises.	4.00	4.11	3.86	3.88	3.93
50. Checking understanding through factual questions.	3.46	3.42	3.51	3.06	3.47

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
51. Thinking aloud.	3.60	3.78	3.35	4.17	3.40
52. Questions asked about text should be: (percentage)					
a. 90% factual & 10% inferential	2.4	4.2	0	0	0
b. 75% factual & 25% inferential	18.8	16.7	21.6	5.3	35.3
c. 50% factual & 50% inferential	45.9	43.8	48.6	42.1	5.9
d. 25% factual & 75% inferential	23.5	25	21.5	42.1	29.4
e. 10% factual & 90% inferential	4.7	4.2	5.4	5.3	11.8
No response	4.7	6.3	2.7	5.3	17.6

Value labels for questions 53-61: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree.

C. Feelings about reading and reading instruction

Mean

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
53. I like to read.	4.80	4.85	4.73	4.90	3.80
54. I like to teach reading.	4.42	4.48	4.35	4.79	
55. I am a good reading teacher.	3.94	3.96	3.92	4.32	
56. My school reading program does not do enough for poor readers.	2.39	2.52	2.22	3.39	2.60
57. My school reading program does not do enough for good readers.	3.27	3.23	3.33	3.84	3.57
Reading program in our school needs improvement in the area of:					
58. Instruction	3.16	3.26	3.03	3.88	2.93
59. Curriculum	3.18	3.33	3.00	3.94	3.29
60. Assessment	3.00	3.15	2.81	3.88	3.21
61. Staff development	3.57	3.74	3.36	4.47	3.73

Value labels for questions 62-63: 1=all; 2=most; 3=many; 4=some; 5=a few; 6=none.

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
62. Parents should do more to help their children to become good readers.	2.82	3.88	2.76	2.53	2.41
63. Students enjoying reading.	2.70	2.61	2.83		

Value labels for question 64: 1=very comfortable; 2=comfortable; 3=uncomfortable; 4=very uncomfortable.

	Total	Target	Comparison
64. When being observed by administrator or reading specialist, I feel...	1.86	1.88	1.88
65. Hardest part of teaching: (number and percent)			
Assess/Diagnosis -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)
Time for preparation -	6(7.1)	3(6.3)	3(8.1)
Lack time in general -	8(9.4)	6(12.5)	2(5.4)
Time to know needs -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0
Time for instruction -	5(5.9)	4(8.3)	1(2.7)
General instruction process -	4(4.7)	2(4.2)	2(5.4)
Specific instruction process -	14(16.5)	9(18.8)	5(13.5)
Student cognitive problem -	11(12.9)	6(12.5)	5(13.5)
Instructional materials -	4(4.7)	1(2.1)	3(8.1)
Teaching strategy/skill -	4(4.7)	2(4.2)	2(5.4)
Teaching different groups -	6(7.1)	5(10.4)	1(2.7)
Student affective problem -	9(10.6)	5(10.4)	4(10.8)
Other -	6(7.1)	2(4.2)	4(10.8)
No response -	5(5.9)	1(2.1)	4(10.8)

(definition of hardest part see Appendix 4)

Part III Staff Development

Value labels for questions 66-81: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree.

A. Attitude

	Mean				
	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
66. Stimulating	3.09	3.09	3.09	3.58	3.36
67. Required	3.42	3.54	3.26	3.50	3.57
68. Instrumental in improving skills	3.38	3.50	3.23	4.05	3.67
69. Tailored to relevant needs	3.27	3.50	2.97	3.74	3.50
70. Providing opportunities to practice new skills	3.13	3.20	3.10	3.05	3.44
71. Providing clear goals	3.28	3.33	3.2	3.32	3.54
72. Providing good reason for skills presented	3.39	3.47	3.29	3.58	3.62
73. More helpful than working with colleagues	2.73	2.61	2.89	2.74	2.63

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
74. Planned with teacher input	3.14	3.09	3.20	3.37	3.67
75. Beneficial for teachers at all performance levels	3.09	3.07	3.12	2.95	3.00
76. Boring	3.02	2.89	3.21	2.21	3.13
77. Waste of time	2.95	2.80	3.15	2.11	2.53
78. Not selected by teacher	3.13	3.02	3.27	3.05	2.53
79. Not addressing needs	2.92	2.76	3.15	2.74	2.82
80. Lack of continuity	3.46	3.43	3.50	3.84	3.06
81. Costly	2.70	2.60	2.82	3.32	2.38

B. Past staff development experience

Number and percent participated, and mode of preference of all subjects.
Value labels of preference: 1=preferred; 2=acceptable; 3=unacceptable; 4=don't know.

	Total	Target	Comparison	Specialist	Admin.
82. College credit coursework	60(70.6)2	34(71)2	26(70)2	18(95)2	15(88)2
83. College non-credit coursework	27(31.8)2	16(33)2	11(30)2	7(37)2	8(47)2
84. College course via T.V.	17(20)2	11(23)2	6(16)4	9(47)2	0 4
85. Inservice via T.V. interactive video	13(15.3)2	9(19)2	4(11)2	14(74)2	6(35)2
86. Teleconferencing	12(14)4	9(19)4	3(8)4	18(95)2	9(53)2
87. Computer software	56(66)2	33(69)2	23(62)2	13(68)2	10(59)2
88. Workshop within district	55(65)2	33(69)2	22(60)2	16(84)2	17(100)1
89. Workshop outside district	57(67)2	33(69)2	24(65)2	17(90)2	16(94)2
90. Attending lectures	54(64)2	33(69)2	21(57)2	18(95)2	16(94)2
91. Reading professional journal	73(86)2	43(90)2	30(81)2	18(95)1	17(100)2
92. Subscribing to professional journal	44(52)2	29(60)2	15(41)2	16(84)2	14(82)2
93. Learning informally from district personnel	67(79)2	40(83)2	27(73)2	16(84)2	16(94)2
94. Observing classroom of another teacher	27(32)2	19(40)2	8(22)1	12(63)4	15(88)1
95. Discussing with colleagues	81(95)1	46(96)1	35(95)1	19(100)1	17(100)1
96. Mean number of days spent on above activities	25	23.9	14.1	22.4	10.1
97. This amount of staff development represents; 1 less, 2 more, 3 average amount. (mode)	3	3	3	3	3

Value labels for questions 98-104: 1=not true; 2=somewhat not true; 3=neutral; 4=somewhat true; 5=true.

Degree to which statements characterize your district.

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
98. Reading is a high priority	4.39	4.28	4.51	4.42	4.00
99. Teachers involved in reading materials selection	4.41	4.54	4.24	4.74	3.80
100. Teachers work together on reading lessons	2.51	2.27	2.81	3.00	3.00
101. Principals participate and support	3.62	3.65	3.58	3.95	3.78
102. Teachers help plan	3.04	2.84	3.27	3.26	3.46
103. Participation is mandatory	3.00	2.91	3.03	3.42	2.86
104. District provides incentives	3.01	3.07	2.94	3.61	3.18
105. Number and percent preferring reading instruction staff development time in future:					
more time -	52(61)	30(63)	22(60)	16(84)	11(65)
less time -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)	1(5.3)	1(6)
same time -	25(29)	12(25)	13(35)	2(11)	3(18)
no response -	6(7.1)	5(10)	1(2.7)		2(12)
106. Number and percent that need staff development in the area of:					
Comprehension -	10(12)	9(19)	1(2.7)	3(15.8)	3(17.6)
Reading -	25(29)	18(38)	7(19)	4(21.1)	2(11.8)
Gifted/Talented -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0	1(5.3)	2(11.8)
Teaching skill/strategy -	4(4.7)	2(4.2)	2(5.4)	2(10.5)	1(5.9)
Modeling concept -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)		
Grouping -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)		
Critical thinking -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)		
Phonics -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)		
Computer -	3(3.5)	2(4.2)	1(2.7)		
Skill development -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)		
Managing reading -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)		
Language -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0		
Watching model -	1(1.2)	1(2.1)	0		
New idea/strategy -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)		
Curriculum -	2(2.4)	1(2.1)	1(2.7)		
Content area -				4(21.1)	4(23)
Writing -				1(5.3)	3(17.6)
Other -	5(6)	2(4.2)	3(8.1)	3(15.8)	2(11.8)
No response -	23(27)	8(17)	15(40)	1(5.3	1(5.9)

	Total	Target	Comparison	Reading Specialist	Admin.
107. Preferred strategy for receiving SD:					
Workshop -	57(67)	33(69)	24(65)	13(68)	11(65)
Coursework -	6(7.1)	2(4.2)	4(11)	1(5.3)	1(5.9)
Workshop/coursework -	9(10.6)	4(8.3)	5(14)	2(10.5)	1(5.9)
Seminar -	1(1.2)	0	1(2.7)		1(5.9)
Other -	3(3.5)	3(6.3)	0		
No response -	9(10.6)	6(12.5)	3(8.1)	1(5.3)	1(5.9)

FALL SURVEY RESULTS
WISCONSIN READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT II
(Reading Specialists and Administrators)

Part I Descriptive Information

		Reading Specialist		Administrator
1. Grades responsible for:				
	K-6 -	3(15.8)		2(11.8)
	K-12 -	9(47.4)		3(17.6)
	1-8 -	1(5.3)	K-8 -	3(17.6)
	2,3,4 -	1(5.3)	PreK-12 -	1(5.9)
	7-12 -	1(5.3)	K-5 -	2(11.8)
	8&9, 9-12 -	1(5.3)		1(5.9)
	No response -	3(15.8)	PreK-6 -	5(29.4)
	Total	19(100)		17(100)
Grade taught this year:				
	K-6 -	4(21.1)	None -	13(76.5)
	1-8 -	1(5.3)	Some -	2(11.8)
	7-8 -	3(15.8)		
	Chapt. I 2.6 -	1(5.3)		
	2nd -	1(5.3)		
	1,2,3-5 -	1(5.3)		
	3-4 -	1(5.3)		
	1-7 -	2(10.5)		
	1-5 -	2(10.5)		
	4th -	1(5.3)		
	Other -	1(5.3)		
	No response -	1(5.3)		2(11.8)
Last Year:	K-6 -	4(4.1)	None -	13(76.5)
	1-8 -	1(5.3)	Some -	2(11.8)
	7-8 -	1(5.3)		
	Chapt. I 2-6 -	1(5.3)		
	2nd -	1(5.3)		
	1,2,3-5 -	1(5.3)		
	3-4 -	1(5.3)		
	1-7 -	2(10.5)		
	1-5 -	2(10.5)		
	4th	1(5.3)		
	Other -	2(10.5)		
	No response -	2(10.5)		2(11.8)
2. Mean percentage of last year's students judged to be:				
good readers -		25.6		36.2
average readers -		43.4		48.6
poor readers -		47.6		15.4

3. Three most common reading problems of poor readers last year:		
First problem identified:		
comprehension -	15.8	
word problems -	26.3	
general reading -	15.8	
larger text unit -	10.5	
no response -	10.5	
Second problem:		
word problem -	26.3	
general reading -	15.8	
comprehension -	15.8	
larger text unit -	10.5	
no response -	10.5	
Third problem:		
word problem -	21.1	
larger text unit -	21.1	
general reading -	15.8	
affective -	10.5	
no response -	10.5	
4. Hours spent weekly supervising reading last year:	9 put "zero" 2 put 25 1 put 15	3 put "zero" 2 put "N/A" Others range from "0.5" to "6"
5. Average minutes spent per week last year on reading instruction with:		
teacher -	139(5)*	50(6)
reading specialist -	55(14)	78(9)
librarian -	27(9)	37(9)
administrator -	40(9)	21(13)
teacher aides -	85(13)	5(16)
parents -	38(6)	35(14)
	*Number of persons not responding	
6. a. Education degree received:		
BS -	53%	59%
BA -	32	12
M. Ed -	5.3	
MST -	5.3	
MS -	5.3	29

b. Degree major:		
Elementary Education -	48%	41%
Reading -	10.5	
English -	10.5	
Administration -	5.3	30
Education -	5.3	6
History -		6
Sociology -		6
Other -	21	12
c. College attended for first degree:		
UW - Eau Claire -	42%	
UW - Stevens point -	21	18%
UW - LaCrosse	5.3	12
Winona State University -	5.3	6
UW - Superior -		24
UW - Milwaukee -		6
UW - Madison -		6
Other -	26	29
d. Year completing first degree:	Reading Specialist	Administrator
	Number and Percent	
1950-1955 -		3(18)
1956-1960 -	1(5.3)	1(5.9)
1961-1965 -	4(21.1)	1(5.9)
1966-1970 -	6(31.6)	7(41.2)
1971-1975 -	4(11.1)	3(17.7)
1976-1980 -	2(10.6)	1(5.9)
1981-1985 -	1(5.3)	1(5.9)
1986 -		
No response -	1(5.3)	
e. Percent with second degree:		
MS -	31.6	47.1
MST -	21.1	
MA -	10.5	17.6
BS -	10.5	17.6
Other -	5.3	5.9
No response -	21.1	11.8
f. College attended for second degree:		
UW - Eau Claire -	31.6%	
UW - Stevens Point -	21.1	11.8
UW - Superior -	5.3	29.4
UW - LaCrosse -	10.5	
UW - Stout -	5.3	
UW - Madison -		5.9
Other -	5.3	41
No response -	21.1	11.8

g. Year completing second degree:

	Number and Valid Percentage	
1950-1955 -		1(6.7)
1956-1960 -		2(13.3)
1961-1965 -	1(6.7)	2(13.3)
1966-1970 -	1(6.7)	2(13.3)
1971-1975 -	6(40.2)	1(5.9)
1976-1980 -	6(40.2)	4(26.8)
1981-1985 -		2(13.3)
1986 -	1(6.7)	1(6.7)
Total -	15(100)	15(100)

h. Percent receiving a third degree:

MST -	5.3	
MA -	5.3	
MS -	5.3	11.8
Other -	26.3	11.8
Total -	42.2	23.6

* one person had a fourth degree, Ed.D.

7. a. Number and percent of first-listed reading-related coursework taken during the past two years:

general theory/method -	3(15.8)	2(11.8)
language art -	1(5.3)	
foundation courses -	4(21.1)	2(11.8)
other -	2(10.5	
none -	9(47.4)	13(76.5)

b. Sites where courses were taken:

UW - Stevens Point -	10%	30%
UW - Superior -	30	20
UW - Eau Claire -	50	50
UW - LaCrosse -	10	

8. a. Number and percent of professional development activities participated in during the past two years:

conference/convention -	6(31.6)	3(17.7)
inservice -	3(15.8)	3(17.7)
workshop -	2(10.5)	
CESA reading -	1(5.3)	
Storylord videos -	1(5.3)	
other -	4(21.1)	
no response -	2(10.5)	11(64.5)

b. Valid percentage activities in institutions:		
LaCrosse -	13.3	33.4
CESA -	40	33.4
Local -	13.3	
Eau Claire -	13.3	16.7
Conomowac -	6.7	
WSRA -	6.7	
Other -	13.3	16.7
9. a. Number of Wisconsin State Reading Association:	Number and Percent	
Yes -	13(68.4)	
No -	6(31.6)	17(100
b. If member, mean years of being a member:	10	
10. Mean number of years:		
a. as reading supervisor -	9.3(8)*	
b. being a teacher -	19(2)	18(2)
c. working in this school -	11(2)	13(2)
d. being administrator -		10(2)

*Number of persons not responding

Part II Reading instructional knowledge attitude and behavior.

11. a. First difference between good and poor readers:	Reading Specialist	Administrator
	Number and Percent	
Metacognition -	7(36.8)	
Use of strategy -	6(31.6)	
Affect -	3(15.8)	2(11.8)
Comprehension -	2(10.5)	9(52.9)
Reading characteristics -	1(5.3)	2(11.8)
Words/vocabulary -		2(11.8)
Other -		2(11.8)
b. Second difference between good and poor readers:		
Affect -	2(10.5)	
Fluency -	3(15.8)	
Comprehension -	3(15.8)	5(29.4)
Use of strategy -	2(10.5)	
Metacognition -	3(15.8)	2(11.8)
Reading characteristics -	2(10.5)	2(11.8)
Decoding -		1(5.9)
Amount of reading -		1(5.9)
Other -	1(5.3)	
No response -	3(15.8)	6(35.3)

	Number and Percent	
12. Hardest part of teaching reading:		
Assess/diagnosis -	1(5.3)	
Lack of time -	5(26.5)	6(35.3)
General instruction -	1(5.3)	
Special instruction -	2(10.5)	
Student cognitive problem -	4(21.1)	2(11.8)
Instructional materials -	1(5.3)	2(11.8)
Teaching different groups -	1(5.3)	
Student affective problems -	2(10.5)	
Using strategy/skill -		2(11.8)
Administration problem -		3(17.6)
No response -		2(11.8)
13. Hardest part of supervising:		
Lack of time -	4(21.1)	7(41.2)
Lack of experience -	3(15.8)	2(11.8)
Lack of expertise -	5(26.3)	3(17.6)
Change teacher's strategy -	1(5.3)	1(5.9)
Observe teaching process -	1(5.3)	1(5.9)
Teacher low proficiency -		1(5.9)
Other -	2(10.5)	1(5.9)
No response -	3(15.8)	1(5.9)
14. Degree to which most teachers feel comfortable when observed by reading specialist or administrator.		
Value labels: 1=All; 2=Most; 3=Many; 4=Some; 5=A Few; 6-None		
	2.83	2.59

For other items see Survey Result I

Appendix I

Definition of three most common reading problems poor readers had (in teacher's words)

Affective:
- lack of interest
- short attention span
- lack of concentration
- poor attitude about learning
- lack of motivation

General reading problem:
- reading slowly
- retention
- do not think about what they are reading
- limited background
- reading skills are not at the grade level

Word problem:
- word attack skills
- decoding
- limited vocabulary
- phonics skills
- sight words
- decoding long words
- substitute words
- general word recognition skills
- reversals of letters and entire words

Metacognition:
- all effort was in decoding
- no plan
- poor ability to monitor their own reading
- lack of skills in knowing where to start
- reading and understanding directions
- not predict

Appendix 2 : Definitions of other approaches

Books by genre:
- plays
- short stories
- novels
- poetry
- classics (Newberry)
- non-fiction
- trade books
- weekly reader
- Volume reading Club, RSSRETC

Media/print:
- newspaper
- magazine
- wordsmith
- Story bound
- Read Action, Choices, Current Events
- Reading writing connection

AV materials:
- filmstrips
- TV programs
- Software
- Audio tapes
- Instructional TV

Commercial Reading:
- SRA
- Reading Kits
- Rate Builders
- Distar
- End Skill Inst. (CRB)
- Specific Skills
- Barnel Loft
- Unde Bunny Comprehension Book
- Exploring Today-Merrill

Vocabulary development:
- Wordcraft
- Controlled Reading

Teachers' own materials:
- skill sheet
- comprehension sheet
- own idea
- special units

Organizational approaches:
- learning center
- library books
- station activities
- reading specialist in room
- individual reading
- direct instruction

Vocabulary identification:
- Phonics
- sight word approach
- dictionary skills
- structural analysis

Content area:
- oral reading in other disciplines
- Content area
- reading for concepts
- New Practice Reader
- functional reading

Appendix 3 : Definition of differences between good and poor readers (in teachers'words)

Affect:
- enjoy reading/unhappy about reading
- good self-image/poor self-image
- self-motivated/lack of motivation
- confident in ability/not confident

Fluency:
- read fluently/read word by word
- read quickly/read slowly

Comprehension:
- read to get meaning/read to decode
- comprehend/decode

Words/vocabulary:
- understanding vocabulary in context/pronunciation of words
- know the sight words/not know the sight words
- know how to attack words/not know how to attack words

Use of strategy:
- use aid to comprehend/only pronounce words
- make inferences, guess, predict
- using help in text

Metacognition:
- have plans/no plans
- systematic approach to materials
- aware of what they do and why do it
- know there are different goals, strategies reading different materials
- monitoring reading (know when they are not comprehending and use strategies to fix comprehension problems/stop to check understanding /tolerant of incomprehensible problems.)

Reasoning:
- have reasoning skills
- critical thinking

Reading characteristics:
- become character of story
- ability to concentrate
- retention of knowledge gained
- apply what read to personal situation
- have experience to associate
- have a picture in mind/no picture in mind

Amount of reading:
- read a lot
- do independent reading

Appendix 4 : Definitions of hardest part of teaching for me

General instruction process:
hard to do everything planned
finding the best way for students to learn

Specific instruction process:
asking right kind of questions
individualizing
recognizing where they are at (level) and setting a structure to get them better
accented and unaccented syllables in words that are spelled the same
finding ways to challenge good readers
providing a continuum for the same strategies that all good readers have
making sure everyone has mastered the proper skills
modeling
meeting individual needs

Student affective problem:
trying to change student attitude about reading
keeping interest of all students
getting student motivated
keeping student attention and interest
making students believe if they practice reading on their own they will become better readers

Student cognitive problem:
trying to provide for many abilities in a group
reaching all the kids of different levels
helping middle and slowest students to master decoding and comprehension skills

Instructional materials:
becoming familiar with text, materials
learning new programs
finding/developing good and challenging materials
lacking a variety of materials
making sense out of my disordered teachers' manual
working with basal
branching out beyond basal

Teaching strategy and skill:
teaching concept such as thinking, inference
getting my students to answer non-literal level questions
teaching inference
to get the pupils to go back in the story to kind sentences or phrases to provide their answers
incorporating reading strategies in other texts

Teaching different groups:
grouping, keeping one group busy with something constructive when with the other group
doing everything I want when having more than one group
dividing time equally to teach both groups

Teacher

Wisconsin Evaluation Questionnaire: Reading

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

If you teach reading to more than one class, please answer the questions below for both classes.

1. Grade(s) or subject(s) taught

This year ____________________

Last year ____________________

2. Approximately what percentage of your students last year were

good readers _____ average readers ______ poor readers ______

3. How would you describe the three most common reading problems your poor readers had last year? (most common first)

____

____

____

4. If you used a basal reading program last year, which one(s) did you use? What percentage of your reading instruction was based on the basal materials?

Basal reading program used:	% of reading instruction based on basal reading program

5. If you used any other approach(es) to reading instruction, what did you use? What percentage of reading instruction was based on that approach(es) last year?

Other approach(es)	% of my reading instruction

6. On the avearge, how many hours a day did you spend teaching reading last year? (Include time spent working with groups and individuals and monitoring seat work.) _____

7. Last year, approximately what percentage of reading instruction time during an average day would your students spend working

   as a class_____ in small groups_____ in pairs______ alone_____

If you used small groups for reading instruction last year,

8. How many reading groups were there? (If the number changed, indicate the progression, e.g., 2,4,3.) _____

9. How did you form the groups? (e.g., by similar or different reading abilities, by task or interest)

   ____

   ____

10. How much time did you spend weekly last year preparing to teach? What percentage of your preparation time (at home and in school) did you spend last year preparing to teach reading?

    _____Average number of hours prep time a week
    _____% of that time spent on reading

11. Approximately how many hours a week last year did you spend with the following people on reading instruction or reading-related matters?

    teachers_____
    reading specialist_____
    librarian_____
    administrators_____
    teacher aides_____
    parents_____

12. Education degree(s) and major(s)/concentration(s)

degree	major/concentration	university/college	year

13. Courses relevant to reading instruction you have taken during the last two years.

course	university/college	year

14. Other professional development activities relevant to reading instruction in which you have participated during the last two years

activity	institution	duration	year

15. Are you a member of the Wisconsin State Reading Association?_____
If so, how long have you been a member?_____

16. How many years have you

been a teacher?_____
taught elementary grades?_____
taught the grade you are teaching this year?_____
taught in the school you are teaching in this year?_____

READING

The words reading, read, etc. refer here to reading to understand rather than just reading for fun. The word text refers to any kind of reading matter including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, and so forth.

	A Strongly Agree	B	C Neutral	D	E Strongly disagree	F Question not clear
17. There is a best way to read a particular text. All other ways are not as good.	A	B	C	D	E	F
18. Some questions about a text cannot be answered by looking in the text.	A	B	C	D	E	F
19. Equally good readers will have the same comprehension problems when reading the same text.	A	B	C	D	E	F
20. Thinking about what one knows about a topic before reading about that topic usually causes comprehension problems.	A	B	C	D	E	F
21. While reading, paying attention to the organization of the information is not very important.	A	B	C	D	E	F

22. Rank the following remarks from 1-4 in order of importance:

I think of reading as a process of . . .

_____finding the meaning in text.

_____connecting what one is reading to what one knows.

_____understanding the words and sentences in a text.

_____making meaning.

23. What are the two most important differences between good and poor readers. (You can mention more than two.)

READING INSTRUCTION

How you respond to the following statements about reading instruction might depend on the grade(s) and students you teach. As you respond to the statements, please keep your grade and your students in mind.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree	Question not clear
24. Comprehension skills and strategies should not be taught to students until they have a thorough grasp of decoding skills.	A	B	C	D	E	F
25. Reading strategies form a hierarchy which should guide the sequence in which they are taught.	A	B	C	D	E	F
26. Two essential parts of teaching a reading strategy are teaching the situations in which to use it and teaching the reason for using it.	A	B	C	D	E	F
27. Reading instruction for poor readers should focus almost exclusively on decoding and other basic skills until they have mastered them.	A	B	C	D	E	F
28. Teaching students how to recognize and solve comprehension problems is crucial.	A	B	C	D	E	F
29. Incorporating reading instruction into instruction in other subject areas makes it very difficult to teach that subject well.	A	B	C	D	E	F
30. Reading instruction and writing instruction should be kept separate to avoid confusing or overloading students.	A	B	C	D	E	F
31. Basal reading programs do a good job of teaching reading.	A	B	C	D	E	F

How important is it to teach the following reading skills and strategies to students at your grade level?

A	B	C	D	E	F
Unimportant	Not Very	Important	Very Important	Essential	Unfamiliar

32. previewing text features before reading A B C D E F

33. comparing text to what the reader already knows A B C D E F

34. scanning text for easy words A B C D E F

35. developing plans for reading text A B C D E F

36. skimming first and last sentences before reading A B C D E F

37. making predictions and confirming hypotheses A B C D E F

38. paraphrasing what is read A B C D E F

39. reading for word meaning A B C D E F

40. fixing problems with text meaning A B C D E F

41. locating right answers in text A B C D E F

How important are the instructional strategies below for teaching reading at your grade level?

A	B	C	D	E	F
Unimportant	Not Very	Important	Very Important	Essential	Unfamiliar

42. semantic mapping A B C D E F

43. whole class instruction A B C D E F

44. student/teacher interviews about the reading process A B C D E F

45. round robin reading A B C D E F

46. directing reading thinking activity A B C D E F

47. directed reading activity	A	B	C	D	E	F
48. skill and strategy practice on texts of similar complexity	A	B	C	D	E	F
49. independent skills and strategies excercises	A	B	C	D	E	F
50. checking understanding through factual questions	A	B	C	D	E	F
51. thinking aloud	A	B	C	D	E	F

52. As a rule of thumb the questions asked about a text should be approximately:

A. 90% factual and 10% inferential
B. 75% factual and 25% inferential
C. 50% factual and 50% inferential
D. 25% factual and 75% inferential
E. 10% factual and 90% inferential

FEELINGS ABOUT READING AND READING INSTRUCTION

	A Strongly Agree	B	C Neutral	D	E Strongly disagree	F Question not clear
53. I like to read.	A	B	C	D	E	F
54. I like to teach reading.	A	B	C	D	E	F
55. I am a good reading teacher	A	B	C	D	E	F

The reading program for my school does not do enough--

56. for poor readers.	A	B	C	D	E	F
57. for good readers.	A	B	C	D	E	F

The reading program for my school needs improvement in the areas(s) of:

58. Instruction	A	B	C	D	E	F
59. Curriculum	A	B	C	D	E	F
60. Assessment	A	B	C	D	E	F
61. Staff Development	A	B	C	D	E	F

62. _____of the parents of my students should do more to help their children become better readers.

A. All   B. Most   C. Many   D. Some   E. A Few   F. None

63. _____ of my students last year enjoyed reading.

A. All   B. Most   C. Many   D. Some   E. A Few   F. None

64. When the reading specialist or principal observes me teaching reading and gives me feedback, I am _____.

A. very comfortable   B. comfortable   C. uncomfortable
D. very uncomfortable

65. The hardest part of teaching reading for me is_____.

____

____

____

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Indicate the degree to which the following phrases describe staff development efforts you have been involved in:

	A	B	C	D	E
	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree
66. Stimulating	A	B	C	D	E
67. Required	A	B	C	D	E
68. Instrumental in improving my professional skills	A	B	C	D	E
69. Tailored to relevant needs	A	B	C	D	E
70. Designed to provide opportunities for practice of the new skill	A	B	C	D	E
71. Able to provide clear goals and objectives	A	B	C	D	E
72. Able to provide good reason for skills presented	A	B	C	D	E

73. Generally, more helpful than work with a colleague	A	B	C	D	E
74. Planned with teacher input	A	B	C	D	E
75. Beneficial for teachers at all performance levels	A	B	C	D	E
76. Other ________________________	A	B	C	D	E

The most important weakness(es) of staff development activities I've been involved in are:

	A Strongly Agree	B	C Neutral	D	E Strongly Disagree
77. Boring	A	B	C	D	E
78. Waste of time	A	B	C	D	E
79. Generally not selected by teaching staff	A	B	C	D	E
80. Do not address my needs	A	B	C	D	E
81. Lack of continuity from one staff development program to another	A	B	C	D	E
82. Costly for me personally (in terms of time, effort, or money)	A	B	C	D	E
83. Other ___________________________	A	B	C	D	E

Indicate whether you have had any experience with the following staff development instructional strategies in Column A, and indicate your preference in Column B.

Column A

Column B

1 = Preferred
2 = Acceptable
3 = Unacceptable
4 = Don't know

	I have participated:		My learning preference:			
84. College coursework (credit)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
85. College coursework (non-credit)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
86. College coursework via television	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
87. Inservice via television interactive video	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
88. Teleconferencing	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
89. Computer software programs	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
90. Workshop within district	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
91. Workshop outside of district	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
92. Attending lecture	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
93. Reading professional journal	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
94. Subscribing to professional journal	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
95. Learning informally from district personnel (e.g., computer use)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
96. Observing in classroom of another teacher	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
97. Discussing ideas/problems with colleagues	YES	NO	1	2	3	4
98. Other____________________	YES	NO	1	2	3	4

99. The total amount of time that I have spent during the past year on all of the above activities is probably about: ________ days.

100. This amount of time represents _____ 1) less than 2) more than 3) about the average time I normally spend on professional development activities each year.

READING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The following items pertain specifically to staff development efforts in reading. Please indicate the degree to which the following statements are true in your school district.

	True			Not true	
	A	B	C	D	E
101. Reading is a high priority.	A	B	C	D	E
102. Teachers are involved in reading materials selection.	A	B	C	D	E
103. Teachers work together on reading lessons.	A	B	C	D	E
104. Principal participates in and supports reading staff development activities.	A	B	C	D	E
105. Teachers help plan reading staff development activities.	A	B	C	D	E
106. Participation in reading staff development programs is mandatory.	A	B	C	D	E
107. District provides incentives, such as released time, expenses, and/or college or district credits for time spent on reading staff development activities.	A	B	C	D	E

108. My preference would be to have _______ 1) more 2) less 3) some time spent on staff development activities in the future.

109. I most need staff development in the area of ____________________.

110. My preferred choice of receiving staff development is by (e.g. coursework, workshops) ______________________________.

Please make any comments on this section of the questionnaire.

____

____

____

Spring Survey of Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project

Part I Descriptive Information

	Total of target & comp.	Target	Comparison
1. Highest educational degree received (number & percent)			
BS-	53(64.6)	27(64.3)	26(65.0)
BA-	15(18.3)	10(23.8)	5(12.8)
MA-	2(2.5)		2(5.0)
MS-	7(8.6)	4(9.5)	3(7.5)
Other-	5(6.1)	1(2.4)	4(10.0)
Total	82(100)	42(100)	40(100)
2. Year completing highest degree (number & percent)			
1950-55	1(1.2)		1(2.6)
1956-60	2(2.4)	1(2.4)	1(2.6)
1961-65	7(8.6)	5(12.0)	2(5.2)
1966-70	14(17.2)	7(16.8)	7(12.8)
1971-75	22(27.3)	14(32.6)	7(18.2)
1976-80	8(9.9)	4(10.4)	4(10.4)
1981-85	16(20.7)	6(14.4)	5(13.8)
1986-87	10(12.4)	5(11.9)	5(13.8)
3. Grade taught this year (number & percent)			
K-1	5(6.1)	1(2.4)	4(10.0)
2nd	15(18.3)	7(16.7)	8(20.0)
3rd	23(28.0)	17(40.5)	6(15.0)
4th	19(23.2)	10(23.6)	9(22.5)
5th	11(13.4)	3(7.1)	8(20.0)
6th	7(8.5)	2(4.8)	4(12.5)
Other	2(2.4)	2(4.8)	

Part II Reading and reading instruction

	Total of target & comp.	Target	Comp.	Specilist	Admi.
4. Mean percentage of students judged to be-					
Good readers-	37.9	40.8	34.4	25.2	26.8
Average readers-	46.0	43.0	48.9	49.0	55.5
Poor readers-	21.8	19.6	19.6	30.9	17.7

	Total of Target and comp.	Target	Comp.	Specialist	Adm.
5. The most serious reading problem poor readers had this year (percent of response)					
Words/vocabulary-	16.0	11.9	20.0		
Comprehension-	36.6	33.3	40.0	57.9	85.7
Cognitive problem-	1.2	2.4		5.3	
Metacognition-	4.9	9.5		26.3	
General reading problem	23.2	23.8	22.5	5.3	
Lack of skills-	7.3	9.5	5.0		7.1
Other	8.5	4.8	12.5	5.3	
6. Level at which poor readers have problems (percent of response)					
Word level-	26.8	23.8	30.0	5.3	7.1
Sentence level-	22.0	16.7	27.5	15.8	14.3
Passage level-	37.8	42.9	32.5	73.7	64.3
All the above-	8.5	11.9	5.0	5.3	
Other	1.2		2.5		
No response	3.7	4.8	2.5		14.3
7. Mean percentage of students enjoying reading	67.8	69.7	65.7	58.2	61.9
8. Mean number of hours per week preparing to teach reading	4.8	4.4	5.2	4.8	
9. Mean number of hours per day teaching reading	2.5	3.2	1.9	3.9	
10. Mean minutes spent per week with--					
Teachers-	34(18*)	41(10)	27(8)	69(2)	69(3)
Reading specilists-	48(25)	65(13)	30(12)	205(15)	44(2)
Librarian/ Media specialists-	21(31)	22(16)	20(15)	28(5)	30(2)
Administrators-	12(68)	12(34)	13(20)	20(4)	15(9)
Teachers aides-	50(62)	73(36)	40(26)	39(8)	5(10)
Parents	17(60)	16(31)	18(29)	24(4)	18(10)
* Number of no response					
11. Mean percentage of instruction based on--					
a. Basal reader	71(4*)	70(2)	72(2)	50(4)	0(14)

b. Other approaches	31(3)	31(1)	30(2)	57(4)	0(14)

* No response

12. Hardest part of teaching (number and valid percentage)					
Lack of time-	19(23.2)	12(32.4)	7(17.5)	5(26.3)3	2(14.3)
Assessment & diagnosis-	15(18.3)	5(13.5)	10(25.0)	1(5.3)	
Specific instruction	3(3.7)	1(2.7)	2(5.0)	2(10.5)	1(7.1)
Accommodating affective problem-	6(7.3)	3(8.1)	3(7.5)	3(15.8)	1(7.1)
Accommodating cognitvie problem-	8(9.8)	3(8.1)	5(12.5)	3(15.8)	1(7.1)
Instructional materials-	3(3.7)	3(8.1)			
Teaching different groups-	7(8.5)	6(14.3)	1(2.5)	3(15.8)	5(35.7)
Other-	9(11.0)	4(9.5)	5(12.5)	2(10.5)	
13. Mean number of reading groups	1.8	1.9	1.7	2.3	2.3
14. How reading groups are formed (number of response)					
By ability-	46	27	19	15	10
By insterest-	2	1	1		
By test score-	7	5	2		1
Two or more above ways-	5	1	4	1	1
Other-	3	1	2	3	
No response	19	7	12		2
15. Mean percent of instructional time students spent--					
As a class-	45(4*)	44(2)	46(2)	48(1)	31(4)
In small group	26(22)	30(13)	22(9)	31(4)	22(5)
In pairs-	11(29)	12(17)	10(12)	13(7)	19(7)
Alone-	27(9)	26(6)	29(3)	20(3)	28(4)

* Number of respondents not selecting this option

Part III Staff Development

	Total of target & comp.	Target	Comp.	Specialist	Adm.
16. Number & percent taking college or university course this year					
Yes-	13(15.9)	9(21.4)	4(10.0)	4(21.1)	
No-	69(84.1)	33(78.6)	36(90.0)	15(78.9)	3(21.4)
17. Number & percent participating in staff development activity					
Yes-	41(50.0)	18(42.9)	23(57.5)	16(84.2)	11(78.6)
No-	41(50.6)	24(57.1)	17(42.3)	3(15.8)	3(21.4)
18. Number & percent preferring to spend more time on future staff development					
a.Yes-	41(50.0)	19(45.2)	22(55.0)	11(57.9)	10(71.4)
b.No-	11(13.4)	6(14.3)	5(12.5)	1(5.3)	1(7.1)
c.About the same as this year	29(35.4)	17(40.5)	12(30.0)	6(31.6)	3(21.4)
19. Delivery method preference (Mean value of the scale 1=least preferred 2=not very preferred 3=neutral 4=preferred 5=most preferred)					
a. College coursework	2.74	2.62	2.87	2.68	2.68
b. District /regional workshop	3.79	3.88	3.70	3.85	4.08
c. District-based improvement program	3.64	3.66	3.63	3.95	4.43
d. Informal interaction with other teachers and colleagues	3.88	3.71	4.05	4.00	3.79

Reading Instruction

(Mean value of the scale 1=never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=often 5=always for questions 20 to 35)

	Total of target & comp.	Target	Comp.	Specialist	Adm.
20. Preview text features before reading-	4.26	4.37	4.15	4.59	
21. Compare text to what they already know	4.12	4.17	4.08	4.29	
22. Scan text for easy words-	2.71	2.78	2.64	1.93	
23. Develop a plan for reading text-	3.56	3.56	3.55	3.93	
24. Skim the first and last sentences-	2.69	2.64	2.74	2.67	
25. Make predictions and confirm by pattern-	3.84	4.00	3.68	4.06	
26. Paraphrase what they read-	3.70	3.79	3.60	4.00	
27. Read for word meaning-	3.84	3.93	3.75	3.82	
28. Locate the right answers in text-	3.82	3.86	3.77	3.53	
29. Do semantic mapping-	3.45	3.73	3.15	3.71	
30. Talk about the reading process-	3.64	3.93	3.35	3.82	
31.Do round robin reading-	3.18	2.93	3.45	2.41	
32.Practice skills and strategy on text-	4.07	4.14	4.00	4.00	
33. Check their undersstanding by answering factual questions-	3.95	3.88	4.08	3.41	
34. Think aloud-	3.77	3.88	3.64	3.77	
35. Get invoved in directed reading activities=	4.11	4.20	4.03	4.00	

* Over 90 percent administrators did not respond to the above questions.

The reading programs in my school

(Mean value of the scale 1=strongly disagree 2= disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree for Questions 36 to 42)

	Total of target & comp.	Target	Comp.	Specialist	Adm.
36. Doesn't do enough for poor readers-	2.37	2.38	2.36	2.33	2.64
37. Doesn't do enough for					

good readers-	3.42	3.48	3.36	3.50	3.46
38. Needs improvement in instruction-	3.04	3.00	3.08	3.27	2.91
39. Needs improvement in curriculum-	2.79	2.88	2.70	3.33	3.18
40. Needs improvement in assessment-	2.95	2.98	2.92	2.83	3.09
41. Needs improvement in staff development-	3.37	3.57	3.15	3.50	3.64
42. Basal reading program does a good job of teaching reading	3.42	3.52	3.30	3.22	3.18
43. Questions asked about text should be (percent)					
a. 90% factual and 10% inferential-	1.2		2.5		
b. 75% factual and 25% inferential-	11.0	11.9	10.0	5.3	15.3
c. 50% factual and 50% inferential-	51.2	42.9	60.0	26.3	42.9
d. 25% factual and 75% inferential-	27.0	35.7	20.0	47.4	21.4
e. 10% factual and 90% inferential-	6.1	7.1	5.0	10.5	

Knowledge of Comparison Teachers About WRRIP

1. Failarity with the project (Number and percent)

a. very familiar	4(10.0)
b. general familiar	19(47.5)
c. vaguely familiar	12(30.0)
d. not at all familiar	4(10.0)
e. no response	1(2.5)
Total	40(100)

2. Whether using the following technology in staff development activities (Number and percent)

	Yes	No
a. video tapes	13(32.5)	23(57.5)
b. storylords	16(40.0)	22(55.0)
c. electric bulletin board	2(5.0)	36(90.0)
d. Narrowband radio broadcast or audiotapes	8(20.0)	31(77.5)
e. written materials from the project	15(37.5)	23(57.5)
f. teleconferencing	8(20.0)	30(75.0)

3. Whether interested in getting involved in this project next year(number and percent)

	9(22.5)	6(15.0)	
Need more information before deciding			24(60.0)

4. Rate the benefit of the project (Number and percent)

a. very beneficial	5(12.5)
b. beneficial	19(47.5)
c. somewhat beneficial	3(7.5)
d. not very beneficial	3(7.5)
e. couldn't judge	7(17.5)
f. no response	3(7.5)

Evaluation of Wisconsin Rural Reaading Improvement Project by Target Teachers, Reading Specialists And Administrators

Part I Leadership Team

(Mean value of the scale 1=very poor 2=poor 3=average 4=good 5=excellent)

	N= Target	N= Specialist	N= Administrator
1. Overall effectiveness of the team for facilitating staff development in reading-	3.59	3.84	3.77
2. Overall effectiveness of team members--			
a. administrators-	2.92	3.67	3.62
b. reading specialists-	4.17	4.12	4.42
c. media specialists-	3.36	3.47	3.83
3. Commitment of leadership team to the project-	4.00	4.58	4.23
4. Usefulness of the team in supporting target teachers-	4.10	4.32	4.08
5. Whether you will recommend leadership team to support staff development after this year (Number and percent)			
a. yes	39(92.9)	18(94.7)	10(71.4)
b. no			3(21.4)
c. no response	3(7.1)	1(5.3)	1(7.1)

Part II Technology and material

(Mean value of the scale 1=very poor 2=poor 3=average 4=good 5=excellent)

	N= Target	N= Specialist	N= Administrator
6. Written materials-	3.79	4.16	3.64
7.			
a. effectiveness of videotapes-	3.52	4.17	3.70
b. mean times viewing videotapes-	7.67	8.82	9.50
No response	16	3	10
8.			
a. usefulness of teleconference-	2.51	3.33	3.18
b. mean times involving in teleconference-	3.69	7.12	9.60
No response	14		9

9.			
a. narrowband radio broadcast-	2.34	3.07	2.40
b. mean number of radio programs heard-	4.21	5.85	15
No response-	18	6	12
10.			
a. whether used electronic bulletin board-- (Number and percent)			
Yes-	7(16.7)	7(33.3)	4(28.6)
No-	33(78.6)	12(63.2)	7(50.0)
b. mean times used-	3.00	6.3	6.7
No response	35	8	8

Part III Project resource

(Mean value of the scale 1=not useful 2=not very useful 3=average 4=useful 5=highly useful)

11. Videotapes-	4.00	4.39	4.10
12. Radio broadcast-	2.44	3.72	2.50
13. Written materials-	3.95	4.33	3.40
14. Curriculum guide-	3.65	4.44	3.89
15. Teleconference-	2.75	3.56	4.00
16. Leadership team-	4.03	4.33	4.22
17. Storylords-	4.55	4.67	4.67
18. Whether you used Storylords with students (Number and percent)			
Yes-	40(95.2)	14(73.7)	5(35.7)
No-	2(4.8)	3(15.8)	9(64.3)
If "yes", overall effective on the above scale (mean)	4.63	4.88	5.00
19. The most helpful resouce (Number and percent)			
a. videotapes-	8(19.0)	6(31.6)	
b. radio broadcast-	1(2.4)		
c. written material	7(16.7)	3(15.8)	
d. teleconference-	2(4.8)		
e. leadership team-	2(4.8)	1(5.3)	
f. Storylord-	10(23.8)	1(5.3)	
g. other-	11(26.2)	4(21.1)	

* Most administrators did not respond to the above questions

20. Least helpful resource

a. videotapes			1(7.1)
b. radio broadcast-	17(40.5)	3(15.8)	4(28.6)
c. written material-	5(11.9)	7(36.8)	
d. curriculum guide-	1(2.4)	1(5.3)	
e. teleconference-	10(23.8)	4(21.1)	
f. other-	3(7.1)	4(21.1)	2(14.3)

Part IV Project staff

21. Responsiveness of project staff (Number and percent)

a. very responsive-	5(11.9)	8(42.1)	5(35.7)
b. responsive-	21(50.0)	7(36.8)	4(28.6)
c. somwhat-	10(23.8)	4(21.1)	3(21.4)
d. not very-	2(4.8)		2(14.3)
e. not at all-			
f. don't know-	3(7.1)		

22. Support received by district (Number and percent)

a. a great deal-	9(21.4)	6(31.6)	2(14.3)
b. quite a bit-	12(28.6)	9(47.4)	5(35.7)
c. some-	13(31.0)	4(21.1)	7(50.0)
d. very little-	3(7.1)		
e. not at all			
f. don't know	5(11.9)	1(5.3)	

23. Helpfulness of project staff (Number and percent)

a. very helpful-	6(14.3)	6(31.6)	3(21.4)
b. helpful-	13(31.0)	11(57.9)	6(42.9)
c. somewhat-	12(28.6)	1(5.3)	5(35.7)
d. not very-	4(9.5)	1(5.3)	
e. not at all-			
f. don't know-	7(16.7)	1(5.3)	

24. Overall quality of professioal support from WRRIP (Number and percent)

a. excellent-	6(14.3)	8(42.1)	2(14.3)
b. good-	19(45.2)	7(36.8)	5(35.7)
c. average-	10(23.8)	4(21.1)	6(42.9)
d. below average-	1(2.4)		
e. poor-	1(2.4)		1(7.1)
f. don't know-	5(11.9)		

25. Overall usefulness of WRRIP

(Number and percent)

a. very helpful-	21(50.0)	8(44.1)	6(41.9)
b. helpful-	11(26.2)	10(52.6)	3(21.4)
c. somewhat-	6(14.3)	1(5.3)	2(14.3)
d. not very-	2(4.8)		1(7.1)
e. not at all-			
f. don't knwo-	2(4.8)		2(14.3)

WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
SPRING SURVEY 1988

Item 1. Highest educational degree:

Target Teachers
- Master of Professional Development

Reading Specialist
- Master of Professional Development
- Other certification - Curriculum Coordinator Elementary Principal

Item 5. Most serious reading problem your poor readers had:

Comparison Teachers
- Oral reading
- Physically/emotionally immature
- All of above
- All of above, immaturity
- Phonetics

Target Teachers
- Motivation to read
- Readiness/phonetic approach
- Lack of self motivation
- Prep. time to rewrite lesson program - objectives to use new strategies
- Word attack skills

Reading Specialist
- Transferring reading skills to content materials & independent reading

Item 12. Hardest part of teaching reading:

Comparison Teachers
- Enough time to do one to one teaching for each different problem
- Knowing what to do when diagnosed
- Wish all students could go at their own rate
- Maybe grouping would have helped
- Accommodating individual reading problems (time)
- All of the above

Target Teachers
- Prep. time - materials/lessons based on new theories
- Finding pertinent materials
- Meeting individual needs
- Motivating my low group

Item 13. Grouping students:

Comparison Teachers
- Grade level (1-4th) (1-5th)
- Floating groups based on skills needed
- By teacher recommendation

Target Teachers
- By Chapter 1 and non Chapter 1
- Teacher recommendation

Reading Specialist
- Teacher recommendations
- By computer (random)
- Whole group
- Present to whole group

Item 15. College or university courses related to reading instruction:

Comparison Teachers
- Teaching Reading Comprehension in the Primary Grades
- Integrating reading & writing

Target Teachers
- Critical thinking
- Teaching reading strategies
- Teaching reading strategies
- Reading performance factors
- Current trends & practice in reading instruction
- Reading and writing across the curriculum
- Madeline Hunter workshop
- Two Reading Workshops
- Learning styles

Reading Specialist
- Teaching Reading Comprehension
- Using the computer to teach reading & writing
- Teaching reading comprehension in the primary grades
- Teaching reading comprehension

Item 16. Other reading-related staff development activities:

Comparison Teachers
- Evaluated new basals
- Reading curriculum committee
- Reading teleconference - techniques
- Teacher inservice - techniques
- Inservices run by rural reading committee
- Storylords
- Tapes on directed-reading strategies
- SEC
- Watching a few Reading Comprehension shows on TV after school
- Limited exposure to staff member working with your project

Item 16. cont.

- WI rural reading project - inservice
- Devised a reading test (criterion - reference) for Gr. 2
- Worked on reading curriculum for the SEC
- Inference, prediction and DRTA
- Staff inservice on various reading techniques
- Inservice provide by reading specialist
- Listened to tapes and read articles shared by reading specialist
- Inservice with Scott Foresman rep
- Inservice new text
- Scott Foresman inservice
- SEC reading committee
- Inservice with Peg Suoma
- Dealing with basal selection
- Inservice (rural reading)
- Rural reading project inservices
- Curriculum development

Target Teachers

- Title I workshop
- Reading Conference, Oconomowoc, WI
- Teachers Convention, Eau Claire
- School inservices
- WSRC in Oconomowoc, WI
- Teachers Convention, Eau Claire
- Inservices
- Teleconference
- Text book selection
- SEC - Devel. obj. for testing
- Computer Fair
- Workshops
- Rural reading target teacher
- Curriculum/evaluation assessment
- MacMillan inservice program
- CWRC
- WSRA
- Inservice
- After school inservice meetings on reading strategies given by principal and staff members
- WSRA
- State Reading Assoc. meeting at Oconomowoc
- W.W. Reading Council meeting
- Helped with Social Studies curriculum also program for drug and alcohol abuse
- Curriculum development (Language Arts)

Administrator

- Reading comprehension tapes, 14 of them
- Rural reading project
- Staff development on comprehension strategies
- Staff inservice on strategies
- Rural
- Inservice
- WRRP

Item 16. cont.

Rural reading group
Workshop
Macmillan inservice
R.R. project
Conferences

Reading Specialist

Provided staff with inservice on strategies
Storylords & teaching reading comprehension
Tapes were used with staff
Rural reading
State Reading Conventions (2)
State Engligh Conference
Chapter 1 Reading Workshops (3)
Writing/Reading Connection Workshop (2)
WSRA State Conference
WRREP
WSRA
MWRC
Chapter 1 inservice
WREP
WSRA
MWRC
Chapter 1 inservice
Fall Reading Conference in LaCrosse, WI - Dorothy Strictland and Scott Paris keynoted
Microcomputer workshop in Eau Claire, WI - related to reading software
WWRP
CRISS Project for Secondary Reading Teacher
JTPA Reading & Writing Program
Rural Reading Improvement Project
Four Target teachers all year
Inservice to K-6 staff
NCREL & teachers conferences
Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project
Rural Reading Project
Inservice through CESA
Local school inservice
COOP inservice on Thinking Skills

Administrator/Reading Specialist

Working with study skills staff at Jr. High
Revising K-12 reading curriculum
Developing K-3 rem. reading standard with staff
State Reading Assoc. meeting at Oconomowoc
Wis. Rural Improvement Project
WSRA Conference
Teaching reading as thinking, teleconference
Many inservices

Item 18. Delivery method do you most prefer:

Comparison Teachers
- Summer workshops
- Sharing ideas on effective motivational ideas

Target Teachers
- Inservice
- Telecommunications as we've experienced in WRRP this year
- Released time for special projects
- Continuation of rural reading program

Administrators
- Peer coaching, teachers teaching teachers
- State wide conventions, i.e. Math, Soc. St., Science, Health, PE

Reading Specialist
- Teaching tapes

Item 44. Use of technology for reading-related staff development:

Comparison Teachers
- Writing to Read inservice
- Storylords

Item 47. Recommendation of leadership team approach continue:

Target Teachers
- I think they need to be specifically informed as to what is expected of them and what their role should be.
- Reading specialist
- Not sure
- Yes, definitely
- But given more time to administer her tasks, I don't think this task should fall on a classroom teacher
- What is the actual function - should they help us get materials?
- Development of other strategies
- I would but it should function more as a team - too much responsibility was on our reading specialist
- Not unless program can be used 1-8-
- They know all the students and all the teachers in the school
- I like this form of staff development
- All teachers should be involved now
- Our leadership team has been excellent, however, it has been very time consuming for them
- Together we learned a lot

Administrators
- The real work is in the trenches, therefore leadership teams are somewhat inconsequential except for facilitating.
- We had an excellent year; busy however

Item 47. cont.

Reading Specialist

The team takes the burden off one person

Done mostly by reading spec.

I think our team worked exceptionally well together. Everyone attended, participated and completed their projects and other responsibilities as requested.

you need someone to keep effort coordinated and sustained

Willing to offer limited leadership but expansion to other teachers & continual, target-teacher growth sound stupendous.

We haven't had any staff development, as our program is just getting started.

More enthusiasm once all aspects of the project were in place

Insist on administrative support

Administrators/Reading Specialist

My team feels that it is too much work on top of regular teaching

Item 53. Usefulness of project resources:

TargetTeachers

Scott Paris kit

Paris' kit

Storylords printed materials good

Administrator

Personal visit from Thorzuul

Electronic bulletin board

Item 55. Most helpful resource:

Target Teachers

Written materials

Leadership team

Written materials

Storylords manual

Storylords manual

Storylords

Videos of teachers modeling

Videotapes

Written materials I read & discussions held with reading spec.

Teleconference at Spencer, WI

Reading Specialist

Reading Specialist (P. Suoma)

Storylords

Team meetings

Peg

Storylords curriculum guide

Written materials

Videotapes

Leadership team

Videotapes

Item 55. cont.

Written materials
Videos, literature
Videotapes
Reading specialist
Storylords
TV programs & guide
Leadership team
TV conference
Modeling done by principal
Materials by Rosilind Wold
Storylords
Video (I need to see examples)
Reading materials
Teleconference
The tapes Roz made and her lengthy inferencing and story mapping unit
Radio tapes
Videotapes, broadcasts
Written materials
Storylords
Written materials
Team
Storylords
Binder with related Storylords reading strategy supplements
Reading Specialist
Storylords
Printed materials from other teacher & input from staff members
Written materials
Videotapes
Videotapes

Administrator

Teachers
DPI - Elaine
Wis. network - Elaine/Marge
Viterbo staff people - Ros
Teleconferences
Videotapes
BBC
Discussion with target teachers
Teleconferences

Reading Specialist

Videotapes/Storylords
Meeting face to face with others
Other teachers
Written materials
SCA tapes
Radio tapes
Videotapes
Videotapes, curriculum guide, radio broadcasts, leadership team
Tapes - Tchg rdg comp., Storylord, SCA radio programs on: inference, prior knowledge, story mapping

Resource packets & SCA radio demonstrations
Curriculum guide
Written materials and videotapes
Verbal sharing of ideas and written materials
Had previously used Storylords videos and some videotapes

Administrators/Reading Specialist
Materials sent & having time to work with target teachers
Written materials
Articles to read: Storylords
Leadership team

Item 56. Least helpful resource:

Target Teachers
Radio broadcasts (I felt I didn't use them effectively or take time to absorb the material when I listened.)
Eletronic bulletin board
Radio broadcasts
Written material (no organization to it, too much, no time to weed through it)
Vast quantities of written materials (too much time to sort through)
Radio
Written material
Radio broadcast
Teleconferences
Radio broadcasts (poor reception in our school)
Radio broadcasts
Radio programs (boring)
Radio
Article given us at beginning of project, relatedness?
Teleconferences
Radio programs (difficult to understand)
Curriculum guide
Radio broadcasts
Teleconferences
Teleconference
Written materials
DPI
Radio
Written materials because of lack of organization
Teleconferences due to poor equipment
Radio broadcasts
Radio tapes (maybe my problem - hard to concentrate late at night which is when I used tapes)
Radio broadcasts
All were helpful in some way, I would decline to say one wasn't at all
Teleconferences
Written materials
Teleconferences
Teleconferences

Item 56. cont.

- Teleconferences
- Radio - I hated it
- Teleconferences
- Radio broadcast
- Radio broadcasts
- Radio
- Radiotapes
- Radiotapes

Administrator

- Narrowband radio
- Radio broadcasts
- Videotapes
- Radio
- TV
- Computer workshop
- Narrowband radio

Reading Specialists

- Radio programs
- Radio broadcasts, written materials
- Copies of transcripts from the teleconferences
- Each piece played a part, difficult to separate
- Radio broadcasts
- Teleconference
- Teleconference
- SCA
- Teleconference
- Teleconference
- Teleconference
- Bulletin board
- Storylords but also were quite useful
- Radio programs

Administrator/Reading Specialist

- Electronic bulletin board
- Copies of the teleconferences
- Teleconferences
- Teleconferences

TARGET TEACHERS

Strengths

Working with the target teachers & sharing ideas was very beneficial. Learning new information & applying it to the classroom was exciting.

The program works! My students seem to feel more control over what they read.

Videos - modeling of strategies by teachers!

Introduced me to strategies.

I really evaluated my work as a teacher and had to rethink some of my convictions through.

Made me feel good because I felt I was accomplishing somethng positive!!

Modeling

Teaches us to teach comprehension.

Worthwhile program to continue - spread out more to everyone next year.

Helps make you more aware of the impt. of your rdg. teaching and enables you to share more with colleagues ideas about rdg. & teaching of it.

There were a few techniques that I wasn't aware of that helped my reading instruction this year.

Good materials, helpful specialist.

"Kids" like the change & many put new skills to work - they like to use new terms: inferencing, etc.

Strategies (once learned) could definitely be of value to any program.

Storylords is a great asset for kids to learn strategies (without realizing it).

Our specialist was an exceptional model. Without her our program would have flopped.

Good ideas and modeling on inferencing, semantic mapping, etc.

My students loved Storylords, as did students of other teachers I talked to.

These are skills that can be taught early and built on.

Inservice time to locate and develop curriculum materials.

Can be used (introduced) with current classroom materials.

My philosophy & whole technique of teaching reading has changed. I feel for the best. I feel my students have become better readers because they understand.

My group (4th grade) was very highly motivated by the things that came out of this program. They especially liked our reading specialist's approach & it was fun to see how they used the terms presented, even in letter writing, they used prior knowledge, and references to Storylords, etc. (A very highly motivating approach that developed vocabulary along with good reading habits.) High interest keeps kids "coming back" for more.

It gave me encouragement to go beyond the basal reader.

The children were really excited about the "Storylord" programs.

Leadership team approach unit activities prepared by Marge!

Strategies tried were all useful at my level of teaching with great carry over to content area reading.

TV networking was super.

The strategies of reading seem very important to comprehending. I like the idea of no workbooks. I always did think many pages were not beneficial to good reading.

Videotapes were very informational and gave a clearer concept of the program & its implementation.

Meetings held were very worthwhile - good question and answer sessions.

All the convincing data.

Enthusiasm of project staff.

The information I received has helped me improve my teaching. I hope I can continue in the project next year & that more teachers can be involved.

I think strategic reading techniques should be carried into the content area instruction. Content areas should be prior knowledge, inferencing, and even story mapping in the Social Studies area.

Good radio broadcasts.

Teaching kids how to think.

Teaching kids about their thought processes.

I liked the examples of lessons we could use to implement the teaching strategies in our classroom. Storylords really made it fun to teach the strategies. I appreciated the stories and poems which were included.

The materials we were sent to use were very helpful.

Storylords is very useful.

Leadership Team approach was excellent .

Unit activities were great.

The project was very helpful for me as a new teacher. It provided wonderful resources.

Our reading specilist is a great help to us.

Even though I've had over twenty years of experience, I'm still learning new techniques in teaching. I'm glad I have this opportunity to be a part of the Rural Reading Project.

TARGET TEACHERS

Weaknesses

I thought beginning 1st Grade was too early to start the program but upon completion of the Program and the First grade year I felt it became very successful.

I don't feel that one year for this project is long enough. There is so much that I still need to learn!

It took too long to get everything set up (phones, materials, etc.)

Written material really needs to be simplified and organized. I'd like to see more videos showing the modeling of all strategies.

Overload - too much (even if good it was too much).

More modeling of all strategies.

Moving away from phonics.

Poor radio reception & lost time on some faulty communications.

Large expectations in amounts of material to read along with full teaching load of classes!

Time!

There was too much material to cover and we were not given enough time to read through it all. Many of the activities work better with older children or better readers. Between readings, video tapes, radio broadcasts and teleconferencing - there was too much to try to digest or implement along with trying to keep up with other classroom responsibilities.

So much material to read found it almost impossible to cover all of it on time.

Time consuming - I have only so many minutes in 1 day &/or week. This was another project that took time.

Usually we met after school & by then most of us were beat!

Hated Radio programs!

Lack of field people preparation (from top down).

Radio broadcasts were hard to hear as well as some of the teleconferences. All of the technical areas seem to need work.

There should be some "prior knowledge" of materials & programs before using it for the first time.

More time needed to develop materials for your own use.

There is not enough time in a school day for learning the strategies and reading the massive amounts of material. Perhaps we could get some "free time" worked into our day that we could have a learning - reading session.

There just isn't enough time provided for curriculum development. None of us claimed the actual numbers of hours we have spent out of school working on Rural Reading. The funds couldn't cover the time spent.

We definitely need more time & more help in developing this program, more communication & hands on help with it.

Radio - too outdated.

Lack of prep time.

Handout material lacked orginization and direction.

Thematic discussion questions as study guides to readings would be beneficial.

Could not hear radio broadcasts.

All equipment should have been in working order before the project actually began.

Very poor radio broadcasts - poor reception and too much background interference.

Moved too fast from one reading strategy to another without giving us ample time to implement the strategies.

Lapses in organization - maybe there were just too many irons in the fire with all the forms of media, etc.

Very time consuming - almost too much written material.

It would have been nice to get the materials and equipment on time. Maybe have the project more organized so it would flow more smoothly. Teleconferences need to end by 4:00 because many of us need to catch rides home or get to a certain destination after school on time.

There were many times that the project seemed disorganized. I think some of the project leaders needed to remember back to what it is like to be in a classroom. Some expectations were unrealistic.

Radio - too outdated.

Our whole school needs to be involved in this now so the reading strategies will be developed at all grade levels.

ADMINISTRATOR

Strengths

This Project has brought new life & enthusiasm to Reading instruction and student reading in the Edgar District. (The "people" aspect of the Leadership team made it happen.)

Has better prepared my teachers to teach reading in the 3 & 4 grades.

Leadership Team.

I think the project is very important. I think it made a big difference in the teaching styles of the target teachers.

Project had excellent purpose.

Teaching reading through these strategies was a fine idea.

Weaknesses

Time to keep up with a full-time job and complete the necessary activities of the project.

I would like to see more DPI involvement at the local level.

High Tech. items.

I could have used much more input & direction from WRRIP staff. I felt like I was floundering many times. The project took an incredible amount of time.

Getting project together.

More direction on how we could and should free people for project work.

How $ could be used.

Answers to these questions [survey] seem unanswerable or vague.

Difficult to work all bugs out of communication systems.

Takes time.

READING SPECIALIST

Strengths

Leadership team approach. Unit activities prepared by team leader.

Certainly helped us get involved in the new strategies for teaching reading!

Meeting face to face to discuss our successes & problems.

Good ideas exchanged/sent for us to try.

The 3 chosen strategies were very good. They were interrelated and could be used in all types of reading.

The strategies we worked on were very good for helping improve comprehension in our school.

The readings were excellent. I also liked the packets of reading materials for inferencing and story mappings sent to each project member rather than my copying materials. The project staff, Marge, Roz, Elaine, Doris, Judy, & others were enthused about the project & this spread to the rest of us. There are too many strengths to name such as videos, curriculum guides, etc.

The teleconferences helped to personalize the project - they kept us involved.

I think it brought us together as reading teachers to first think about our goals, methods & strategies. We had time to discuss, plan, prepare, and experiment. I think it has given each of us confidence in the things we were already doing right and armed us with new knowledge and challenges to improve in areas we still need to work on.

Project was excellent for getting current info. (research, etc.) about reading instruction in front of our teachers. Reading specialist acquired much knowledge & sharpened skills as a rdg. spec.

Lots of good materials & aids.

Lots of equipment for schools.

Good leadership personnel.

Good AV resources.

Promoted growth & develoment in teaching of Reading.

All the materials provided - written, videotapes, conferences - greatly increased our knowledge (and application of) well-researched, very effective strategies to improve rdg. comprehension for our students.

Project staff - WRRIP - were so very supportive and encouraging at all times. They are so friendly, helpful and great people to know & work with.

Staff help was great - so was their understanding.

Weaknesses

Radio - outdated.

Technology not in place when it was most needed!

Specific objectives not clear at the beginning.

Usual first year kinks - phone connections.

The access to the technological materials (devices) were not in our building.

Cramped conditions even at location of teleconference facilities and electronic bulletin board.

Access to the technological devices were unhandy because we had to travel 6 miles to the high school to use it.

Rather than having both SCA radio programs and teleconferences, I would rather have had Marge and Ros present the material over the teleconference system only. Then, we could have commented & shared as we went along. OR, we needed specific questions to talk about and to have prepared ahead of time.

It was only pertaining to Elementary - I hope the next year is geared more toward Secondary & J. High so we can promote a fair amount of carry over from each level.

Teachers need more released time to accomplish all of the readings & plan, & implement new strategies.

Technology - radio.

Unfamiliarity & some reluctance to use Electronic Bulletin Board.

Time to do it all! Extremely demanding timewise.

Unless a person values personal growth, the awards/incentives were minimal.

Not a weakness, just unavoidable problems in getting all components in place and functioning as desired. This is to be expected in an experimental project and now future years should see an expansion and continuation of all the excellent learning strategies which our students locally - nationally - so desperately need to know.

More project money needed locally!

More time allocated (locally) for leaders such as myself who tried to carry out the objectives of the projects in addition to my job description which is 100% Chapter I teacher. I also am involved with many other vital school matters - some voluntary - some at the specific request of administration.

Technology was a problem.

ADMINISTRATOR/READING SPECIALIST

Strengths

The approach we used as team teaching was exciting and productive with students.

Appreciated materials provided and time allocated to work with target staff.

The materials we were sent to use were very helpful!

Storylords is very useful.

R.S. principal & teachers working together.

Provided a road that Reading Specialists can use to inservice Teachers.

The project provided our district with a structure for making some much needed changes in our approach to teaching reading.

Weaknesses

Time is needed for inservice coordination of staff prior to onset of school.

High tech equipment needs much more assistance from WRRIP staff in using adequately. (media spec.)

There were many times that the project seemed disorganized. I think some of the project leaders need to remember back to what it is like being in a classroom - some expectations were unrealistic.

Too much too fast - Scared many teachers.

Dates of conferences, meetings were set up during other important events - no regard to other activities - teleconference on Elementary Principal's Spring meeting, etc. Attempting to have all districts at Eau Claire Fall meeting. (Many go to Milwaukee instead).

Teleconferences were scheduled after a busy workday - often difficult to be a part of - or forgotten.

Suggestions

Teleconferences until 4:00 at the latest.

More face to face meetings (i.e. at inservices, conventions).

WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
SPRING SURVEY 1988

Last Fall you filled out a very long evaluation survey. Your patience and effort have been highly appreciated. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in filling out this shorter summative evaluation survey.

1. What is your highest educational degree?
   a) BS
   b) BA
   c) MA
   d) MS
   e) Ed.D
   f) Ph.D.
   g) Other ________

2. Year you completed highest degree: __________

3. Grade level taught this year:

   a) ______K-1
   b) ______2
   c) ______3
   d) ______4
   e) ______5
   f) ______6
   g) ______Other

Reading and Reading Instruction

4. Approximately what percentage of your students this year were:

   Poor readers ______
   Average readers ______
   Good readers ______

5. What was the most serious reading problem your poor readers had this year? (Please circle one)

   a) Words/vocabulary
   b) Comprehension
   c) Affective problems
   d) Cognitive problems
   e) Metacognition
   f) General reading problems
   g) Lack of skills
   h) Other ________________________
   i) Don't know

6. At what level do your poor readers have reading problems:

   a) ______Word level
   b) ______Sentence level
   c) ______Passage level

7. Approximately what percentage of your students would you say enjoy reading?

   ____________%

8. Approximately how many hours did you spend during an average week this year preparing to teach reading?

   ____________hours

9. Approximately how many hours did you spend a day this year teaching reading:

   ____________hours

10. Approximately how many minutes did you spend per week this year with the following people on reading instruction or reading-related matters?

    a) Other teachers ______
    b) Reading specialist ______
    c) Librarian/Media specialist ______
    d) Administrator ______
    e) Teacher aide(s) ______
    f) Parents ______

11. a) What percentage of your reading instruction this year was based on a basal reader? _________

    b) What percentage of reading instruction was based on an approach other than a basal reader? _______

12. What is the hardest part of teaching reading for you?
(Please circle one)

a) Lack of time
b) Assessment/Diagnosis
c) Specific instruction (e.g. vocabulary, inferential process)
d) Accommodating student affective problems
e) Accommodating student cognitive problems
f) Instructional materials
g) Teaching different groups
h) Other ____________________________
i) Don't know

13. a) What is the average number of reading groups you used this year?

a) _______0-1
b) _______2
c) _______3
d) _______4 or more

b) If you grouped students, how did you group them?

a) ______by ability
b) ______by interest
c) ______by test scores
d) ______Other (please name ____________________________)

14. Estimate what percentage of reading instruction in an average day your students spent this year working:

a) ______as a class
b) ______in small groups
c) ______in pairs
d) ______alone

Staff Development

15. Have you taken any college or university courses related to reading instruction this year?
______yes
______no
If yes, give course title: ____________________

16. Have you participated in any other reading-related staff development activities this year besides the Wisconsin Reading Improvement Project?
______yes
______no
If yes, describe activity ____________________

17. Would you like to spend more time on reading-related staff development next year?

______yes

______no

______about the same as this year

18. What kind of delivery method do you most prefer for staff development?

	Least preferred				Most preferred
a) college coursework	1	2	3	4	5
b) district/regional workshops	1	2	3	4	5
c) district-based improvement programs	1	2	3	4	5
d) informal interaction with other teachers and colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
e) Other (please name) ______________________________	1	2	3	4	5

Reading Instruction

Describe your reading instruction by rating the following activities according to frequency of use.

I ask students to:	Always 1	Often 2	Sometimes 3	Rarely 4	Never 5
19. preview text features before reading	1	2	3	4	5
20. compare text to what they already know	1	2	3	4	5
21. scan text for easy words	1	2	3	4	5
22. develop a plan for reading text	1	2	3	4	5
23. skim the first and last sentences before reading a passage	1	2	3	4	5
24. make predictions and confirm by patterns when reading	1	2	3	4	5
25. paraphrase what they read	1	2	3	4	5
26. read for word meaning	1	2	3	4	5
27. locate the right answers in text	1	2	3	4	5
28. do semantic mapping	1	2	3	4	5
29. talk about the reading process	1	2	3	4	5
30. do round robin reading	1	2	3	4	5
31. practice skills and strategy on text	1	2	3	4	5
32. check their understanding by answering factual questions	1	2	3	4	5
33. think aloud about passages	1	2	3	4	5
34. get involved in directed reading activities	1	2	3	4	5

The reading program in my school	Strongly Agree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Strongly Disagree 5
35. Doesn't do enough for poor readers	1	2	3	4	5
36. Doesn't do enough for good readers	1	2	3	4	5
37. Needs improvement in the area of instruction	1	2	3	4	5
38. Needs improvement in the area of curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
39. Needs improvement in the area of assessment	1	2	3	4	5
40. Needs improvement in the area of staff development	1	2	3	4	5
41. Basal reading program(s) in our school do a good job of teaching reading	1	2	3	4	5

42. As a rule of thumb, questions asked about a text should be approximately:
    a) 90% factual, 10% inferential
    b) 75% factual, 25% inferential
    c) 50% factual, 50% inferential
    d) 25% factual, 75% inferential
    e) 10% factual, 90% inferential

The remaining questions focus directly on your participation in the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project (WRRIP).

Leadership Teams

WRRIP used leadership teams which typically included a reading specialist, administrator, and media specialist. Rate the effectiveness of this leadership-team approach in the items below.

	Excellent		Average		Poor
43. Overall effectiveness of the team for facilitating staff development in reading.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Overall effectiveness of team members:					
a) administrator	1	2	3	4	5
b) reading specialist(s)	1	2	3	4	5
c) media specialist	1	2	3	4	5
45. Commitment of leadership team to the project.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Usefulness of the team in supporting target teachers.	1	2	3	4	5

47. Would you recommend the leadership team approach be continued to support staff development after this year?

_______yes

_______no

Comment:____

Technology and Materials

48. How would you rate the written materials provided throughout the project for your use?	1	2	3	4	5
49. Rate the overall effectiveness of the Teaching Reading Comprehension videotapes. a) about how many tapes did you view? __________	1	2	3	4	5
50. How useful were teleconferences involving other project personnel? a) about how many teleconferences were you involved in? ________	1	2	3	4	5

	Excellent		Average		Poor
51. Rate the overall effectiveness of the narrowband radio broadcast programs.	1	2	3	4	5

a) about how many radio programs (audiotapes) did you hear? ________

52. Did you use the electronic bulletin board for project purposes?
a) ______yes
b) ______no
If yes, about how many times? ________

53. Rate the following project resources on their usefulness to you:	Highly Useful		Average		Not Useful
a) videotapes	1	2	3	4	5
b) radio broadcasts	1	2	3	4	5
c) written materials	1	2	3	4	5
d) curriculum guide	1	2	3	4	5
e) teleconferences	1	2	3	4	5
f) leadership team	1	2	3	4	5
g) Storylords	1	2	3	4	5
h) Other ___________________					

54. Did you use Storylords with your students?
a)______yes
b)______no

	Excellent		Average		Poor
If yes, rate the overall effectiveness for reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5

55. What was the most helpful resource to you on the project? __________________________

56. What was the least helpful resource?
____

Project Staff

This project was supported by staff from the Wisconsin DPI and the Wisconsin Radio and Television Networks. Evaluate the effectiveness of this staff in implementing the WRRIP.

57. How responsive were project staff to your specific district needs?
a)______very responsive
b)______responsive
c)______somewhat responsive
d)______not very responsive
e)______not responsive at all
f)______don't know

58. How much support do you think your district received from the project staff?
______a great deal
______quite a bit
______some
______very little
______none
______don't know

59. How useful was the project staff in helping you implement the staff development effort?
______very helpful
______helpful
______somewhat helpful
______not very helpful
______not at all helpful
______don't know

60. Rate the overall quality of the professional support provided by WRRIP staff to your district?
______excellent
______
______average
______
______poor
______don't know

61. How useful was the overall WRRIP project in improving your reading instruction this year?
______very helpful
______helpful
______somewhat helpful
______not very helpful
______not at all helpful
______don't know

62. Do you have comments you would like to add regarding project strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths

Weaknesses

TO: Marge Wilsman and Elaine Anderson
Co-directors, Wisconsin Reading Improvement Project
FROM: Jeri Nowakowski
Director, Rural Education Evaluation Project
DATE: January 29, 1988
RE: Mid-year formative feedback based upon case study

A week ago, January 22, the case study evaluators met here at NIU to discuss the first site visits, which for four of five of us had taken place November or December 1987. We has several objectives. One was to exchange initial observations and methods with each other. A second was to focus our next two visits and our report format. A third was to see what responsible feedback we could give your team after the first of three site visits. Almost an hour and a half during the day was devoted to consideration of how feedback could be provided that met these two critical criteria: first, the "sanctity of site," or maintaining the trust of people and the natural order of events at each site so important for achieving trustworthy field information. And, second, the contractual and ethical obligation to provide useful and responsible feedback to your team that might assist you in mid-year self-assessment and potential realignment of project priorities.

Without belaboring our discussion, let me assure you that the team feels strongly about meeting both criteria, and to that end, made some conscientious decisions about how feedback should be transmitted. Following, then, are a collection of themes that emerged during our discussions relevant to project delivery. I have defined the themes only in terms of issues raised, allowing February 15 to provide us time to discuss what they might mean to project delivery now and in the future. These themes have been circulated back to the case study evaluators for review of their adequacy and accuracy. When we discuss them together on February 15, I will seek your reaction to their format and content. A finalized version of this mid-year formative feedback subsequently will be submitted to EDAT members and NCREL staff.

Themes Emerging from First Site Visits

1. Technology availability and use. Several technology-related issues surfaced including: timely delivery and installation of technology, appropriate placement for easy accessibility and optimal use, integration of technology into the fabric of the school and of the staff development project, evidence of technological "readiness" across sites, and "creative alternatives" employed by sites for access to and use of technology-delivered information.

   For discussion: How are sites using technology? Why? What had been learned about technology needs assessment for assessing a site's readiness for project implementation?

   (My suggestion is that all discussion points allow us to hear insights from your site visits as well as our own.)

2. Shared understanding of project purpose. Several issues emerged indicating differences between project and sites regarding what the project is to achieve. These issues include: perception of multiple and sometimes unclear project goals, questions regarding the preferred balance in implementing a multi-prong staff-development effort, differences in working assumptions about the respective roles of project and sites, differences in rank ordering of project-related objectives, and budding development of a local definition and ownership of "project."

For discussion: What do sites expect from the project, and what does the project expect from sites? How can the project facilitate site tailoring/ownership of project and keep true to project intent?

3. Issues in implementing staff development. Issues relating to staff development include: differing perceptions of the roles to be played in SD by project and site personnel, constraints in delivering SD as intended (e.g. role modeling), lack of clarity about how much and what information sent by the project to the sites should be covered, questions about how much should be covered by each team member, questions about how different pacing needs within site team might be accommodated, challenge of sharing "reading authority" and project ownership with project staff, differences in both the valuing and understanding of the reading instruction principles and skills being delivered, appreciation of DPI interest and involvement in school SD, general interest in "enduring" SD effort, and general appreciation for much of content being presented and its usefulness with kids.

   For discussion: What are the goals and roles of this staff development "model?" What lessons can be learned from implementation to provide guidelines for future?

4. Logistical realities and practical constraints. A number of issues relating to logistics surfaced including: placement of technology within a district, practicality of where materials/technology are placed in a building, the expectations of after-school meeting for teachers, the problems of in-school visits by reading specialists, the problems of communicating across sites to exchange information/materials, apparent "distance" of project staff, the challenge of getting the team together, frustration when logistical constraints are not attended to, conservative optimism that technology might resolve some constraints, and appreciation of new equipment, materials, and "organization" that are residue of project.

   For discussion: How are logistical constraints dealt with by local sites and project staff?

5. Communication. Issues of communication relate to and overlap with several other themes. Generally communication issues include: reactions to the amount of written communication provided regularly by the project, reaction to the tone of some communications, determining how to use, share, and rank order information, reactions to the amount and diversity of verbal communication at project meetings, appreciation of "personalized" feedback, and perceived benefit of more two-way and twelve-way communications.

   For discussion: How adequately is project communicating with sites, how are sites communicating with project? What has been learned about how information should be organized and delivered?

6. Leadership team strategies and expectations. Issues relating to the use of the leadership team included: expected and real motivations for team members, actual and intended meeting patterns, emergence of team "spark plug," role of specific team members and shared understanding of those roles, project and site expectations relating to the role of the principal, benefits and limitation accruing from school climate, teacher attitudes, and district morale, and existence of a coherent project from the perspective of the team.

For discussion: What does the project expect to gain from the leadership team approach, what role might leadership teams play in sustaining the project?

7. Site-specific opportunities, constraints, differences. Many concerns are different across sites and, of course, this an important theme in and of itself. Issues concerning site-diversity include but are not limited to some of the following: degree to which project accommodates local diversity in motivation, team composition/ability, and style of implementation, recognition and optimization of positive site characteristics (e.g. atmosphere promoting student self-esteem, strong principal, cadre of accomplished teachers), recognition and accommodation of local site liabilities or constraints (e.g. inexperienced reading specialist, unenthusiastic staff).

   For discussion: To what degree are local sites expected to personalize the project to fit their own context, to what degree is the project facilitating such tailoring?

On a final note, you will see that generally we have not specified value criteria by which these issues might be evaluated at this point. It is too early, as far as most of the case evaluators are concerned, to do so. In some cases, whether the issues listed are for the better or the worse of the project is ambiguous -- better for a site, but frustrating for the project for example. In other cases, given your own project goals you may find the existence of an issue clearly negative or positive. I'll be glad to discuss with you on the 15th some of the value criteria surrounding a theme that emerged during our discussions.

REPLY TO FORMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT:
WISCONSIN RURAL READING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Prepared by Marge Wilsman, Co-Director

On February 15, 1988 in Madison, Jeri Nowakowski meet with Doris Cook, state reading consultant, Elaine Anderson, state telecommunications consultant and codirector of the project and myself. We discussed the mid-year formative evaluation report Jeri prepared and distributed earlier by mail.

The evaluation method used was case study. Jeri and four other persons spent three days at their site; and then they met to discuss common "responses" to the project found at the five sites. In her formative evaluation report are seven themes that are stated as issues and questions.

In her cover letter Jeri stated that on February 15th, she expected to discuss what each theme meant in terms of **project delivery now and in the future**. On February 15, there was a discussion of whether the themes suggested changes in project delivery, or represented common findings associated with the early stages of all staff development projects and/or technology projects.

During March, I have meet on separate occassions to discuss the contents of that report, with Elaine and Doris. Each time Nancy Bauer, who is Administrator of the Education Services Division of the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Network in which I work, was present. On April 15th, Elaine and I held a telephone conference call with Judy Aakre the project technology consultant and Ros Wold the project reading consultant. The discussions focused primarily on lessons we have learned that we might pass on to others implementing a similar project.

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As a group we primarily are responding to the formative evaluation in terms of things we have learned that can be useful to others seeking to implement this project at another location, as well as in terms of information that can be useful to the project staff as they plan for the second year.

Before finalizing this reply, it is being circulated to the persons mentioned above for review of the contents for adequacy and accuracy. Several modifications were made.

The first theme in the report addresses the technologies used in the project. Five technologies are used in the project and the first section of this reply separately addresses each one. For the reader let me first describe each technology in terms of its use in the project.

Broadcast television Since the mid-seventies, K-12 and teacher inservice programming had been available on the state public television network. Schools may tape programs free-of-charge and for a minimal charge of seven dollars a program, receive tape dubs of all available programming. Accompanying video print materials are sold for a minimal charge of, two to three dollars per series.

In this project the state network was used to broadcast the fourteen one-hour hour television inservice video series "Teaching Reading Comprehension" and the twelve fifteen minute "Storylords" video programs for students. The teacher series is a UW-Eau Claire outreach credit course offered for two or three graduate credits.

Sites agreed to provide VCR's and tape the teacher and student video programs. Tapes of programs missed were supplied by the project staff. The project also supplied to the reading specialist and target teachers copies of the print materials for each series--an eighty-page guide accompanies each series.

SCA (Narrowcast)radio is a special service of the state public radio network that has been available since the early eighties. A special receiver is required to receive the programming, which for example includes a daily newspaper reading service for blind persons. On weekday mornings the service delivers K-12 instructional programming. Again print materials are available for a minimal charge.

SCA receivers contain crystals which are "tuned" to a particular FM frequency. The side ban on the FM frequency which is used to deliver stereo programming also carries the SCA signal. Each project site was given a receiver that is "tuned" to their nearest FM public radio station.

SCA radio was used in the project to deliver programming to the reading specialists in the project. Each program was broadcast twice, in the afternoons. Eight half-hour programs were produced and each had accompanying print materials. The programs focused on the complete instructional cycle associated with teaching of a reading comprehension strategy--the cycle as described in the DPI's 1986 Guide to Curriculum Planning In Reading. The first four programs focused on the "prior knowledge" strategy. Two programs dealt with the "inference" strategy and two with "storymapping."

ITFS Narrowcast Television This new service of the public radio and television network began in 1986 and is used to deliver programming for small audiences, much like local cable television programming. The service is underconstruction and one operational site is the Wausau area. Five project sites close to the Wausau area broadcast tower, received special ITFS receive equipment. Other project participants were invited to travel to any one of these five locations.

ITFS was used in this project to deliver programming to reading specialists, elementary principals and district administrators. Ten twenty-minute video programs were used within a half-day live teleconference format.

Five project sites have available two-way video and audio system called Project Circuit. This project used the audio portion of that equipment during telephone conference sessions.

Telephone Conferencing Equipment Districts not having audio telephone conferencing equipment received three speakers, a microphone and portable carrying case. The two-wire, four-wire equipment can be used in any telephone jack. The equipment was used during the ITFS teleconferences. Also special telephone conference calls were held after every two SCA radio programs. Three telephone sessions were held for every two programms, so that no more than six reading specialists were on the line at one time.

Computer modems were provided districts so they could access an electronic mail and forum computer service also provided by the state public radio and television network. Electronic mail replaced land mail for delivery of personal letters and memos. Forum messages and a forum library replaced land-mail for the delivery of project-wide announcements and documents. The service permitted participants to interact with one another as well as the project staff.

COMMON THEMES EMERGING FROM FIRST SITE VISITS

1. TECHNOLOGY AVAILABILITY AND USE

1.1. Timely delivery and installation of technology Site participants expected to have the equipment in September 1987 when the project began, since we began talking to them about the project and equipment in March. However, we could not order equipment till we were sure of funding, which occurred in June.

Broadcast television was the one technology in place so no delivery or installation problems occured. However, familarity with this technology may prevent some participants from realizing its essential role in this project.

SCA radio receivers were delivered to districts in August 1987. Six receivers had to be exchanged. Two had broken crystals. Four districts needed a different FM frequency. These exchanges were done by October. But unanticipated installation problems existed.

In April 1988 installation problems related to antennas and tape recording equipment still exist that need to be corrected before the project begins again next fall.

Districts agreed to purchase and install FM antennas, when needed. The project staff did not anticipate the detailed kinds of information sites needed to determine (a) if installing an antenna would improve reception or

(2) whether or not their existing antenna was working. For example, some sites had antennas with twin-lead cable that lost the signal rather than improving it. In another site, an antenna having the correct coaxial cable, was located next to a steel beam that absorbed the signal. One site has a properly located antenna with coaxial cable, but up on the roof the cable is disconnected from the antenna.

Schools needed to locate or purchase audio tape recording equipment that has an "audio-in" jack. Schools were using the microphone jack to connect the SCA receiver and the tape recorder. This jack weakens or looses the signal.

In September the Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks broadcast two test SCA radio programs. We expected districts to use this time to assess whether or not they needed an antenna or to determine the effectiveness of their existing antenna and recorder. After four months of unsolved reception problems we repeated this activity in January. This time we sent tapes for districts to record the two test programs. Fifteen of the eighteen districts returned taped. These were analyzed to determine which of the two factors (antenna or recorder) was affecting reception.

On January 25th, 1988 a WISLINE* conference phone call was held with the media specialists in order to provide them with detailed information on ways to improve their reception. In retrospect, the January activity could have been done in August if we had anticipated the problems.

Also in January the network purchased two "sample" FM antennas to be used by the network's two regional ITFS representatives, John Bestul and Byron Anderson. They had been visiting the project sites with SCA reception problems. Now armed with their sample antenna, they can demonstrate to the sites the improved reception from a proper antenna system. We did not realize that sites needed this kind of demonstration. Perhaps these representatives also need demonstration tape recorders with audio-in jacks.

Three other events which were beyond the control of the sites, contributed to the reception difficulties: (1) a January snow storm which blowing out the transmission tower in LaCrosse; (2) the splitting of the FM signal into two signals in the Wausau area; and (3) the networks new use of the SCA signal to remote-control television switching equipment. The problems caused by these events have been corrected. But while the problems existed they added confusion to solving the reception difficulties.

Computer Modems were to be provided to each site in order to use electronic mail and forums. Apple computer who agreed to donate one half of the modems, which arrived in October. However, each site needed a super serial card which had to be ordered. There was a delay in the purchase request because the state administrative data processing staff who review purchase requests related to computer equipment, did not understand why we were buying Apple super serial cards and Apple modems rather than their "approved" kind. The cards finally arrived in February. Immediately, but when weather permitted, project staff began visiting sites to install the computer equipment. At that time we found that one super serial card and one modem cable were broken.

*WISLINE is a bridging phone service of the University of Wisconsin, Extension, which has been used for project conference calls throughout the project.

An unexpected change in the computer bulletin board we planned to use caused further installation problems. In August we gave each site software to use with "Tel-e-Net," the bulletin board service available then. But in November the service changed to "Learning Link." New software had to be found and purchased for each site. Lots of time was spent locating new software, and getting it to interface with the bulletin board, which had the usual installation problems, "bugs."

Sites agreed to install the direct access phone lines needed for the electronic mail. In February four sites still did not have these lines installed.

Although each district received on-site training on how to access and use "Learning Link," we still get calls from library-media specialists who are not able to access "Learning Link." The project staff has trouble in responding because we are not sure if the access problems are due to faulty equipment or inexperience. We need a complete extra set of equipment that we can exchange with schools while we test their existing equipment. It is now May 1st and one district still does not have the correct computer equipment, because we are missing a super serial card cable. If we had a complete extra set we could give it to them temporarily.

Telephone conferencing equipment We decided to wait for the availability of new two-wire, four-wire equipment that would permit schools to use it in any phone jack. Also, for the same price as the older equipment, we could purchase schools three rather than one microphone, and a carrying case. The new equipment was not ready in September. The purchase request for the equipment was delayed because the state department of administration insisted that the equipment be put out to bid. The equipment did not arrive till January, 1988.

In the most northern site, the phone lines are too weak to support the new equipment. We hear cross-talk during conference calls. In another site in the Wausau area, there is an installation problem related to the local phone system the district purchased, which may not be wired correctly. A representative of the vendor for the telephone conferencing equipment, JEP Systems, is working with that site. The vendor has requested a recall of all equipment in June because the four wire is not working correctly.

The project staff decided to wait till the telephone conferencing equipment and computer equipment have arrived, so we could install them simultaneously. The equipment was finally available in early February when travel in northern Wisconsin is at its worst.

ITFS(narrowcast video) The ordering of the ITFS equipment--the $6000 purchase had to go out on bids; and this took time. The equipment was installed by December 1st. However, in order to make the equipment interactive, we needed the telephone conferencing equipment, which was not available until February.

Discussion: We have learned a lot of lessons, and they are not all related to equipment. The delays in delivery and installation of equipment have affected the project in two ways related to the delivery of staff development. First, the staff spent an unexpected amount of time dealing with delivery and installation problems, rather than in delivering staff development. Second, the existing and first used technologies were those best used to "deliver" information, like the broadcast TV and narrowcast radio. We held early telephone conferences on regular phones. The equipment that could be used for "interactive" staff development activities, like live modeling and coaching, is still not available to all project sites. A more extensive discussion of these matters in given later in this reply.

In Phase Two we will have one complete set of demonstration equipment.

1.2 The appropriate placement for easy accessibility and optimal use

Districts did not receive specific directions but rather advice on where to place equipment, because the staff did not think they would appreciate it. This is a touchy subject because staff in local districts do not like to be told what to do.

ITFS(narrowcast video) is installed at the high school, in the Wausau area because the districts anticipated using the equipment to receive high school courses, like foreign language, which they cannot afford to offer. In the LaCrosse area the high school is also the location for the Project Circuit two-way interactive video cable system because it is primarily used to deliver high school courses.

When the telephone conferencing equipment is used with the ITFS system, it needs to be carried to the high school. Otherwise the telephone conferences can be held at the elementary school building. We need to ask participants how this high school location can be made more accessible--or if it can be. We also need to sort out whether accessibility questions are raised by Project Circuit people who have dealt with the high school arrangement for 10 years, or only by Wausau area participants where the equipment is new.

Two districts in the Wausau area are beyond the required thirty mile radius from the ITFS broadcast tower to receive the signal. They travel the 10-15 miles to another district for the ITFS activities.

ITFS is not available to six districts around Eau Claire, because of terrain problems. Although sites are within thirty miles of the broadcast tower, which is under construction, there are hills obstructing the signal. So at present there is no way to deliver the video programming or television conferences produced for narrowcast television. This programming is not the kind that can be broadcast over the state public TV network. This May the network is installing ITFS receive equipment at the site these six districts use for regional meetings and services, the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 10 office in Chippewa Falls. We plan to use this site for ITFS activities next year.

SCA(narrowcast radio) receivers must face the tower broadcasting the signal. In some schools this location is an inconvenient one, like the school psychologists office at one site. Another room was found, however, when the regional ITFS representative visited the district to help them install an FM radio antenna. We thought the library-media specialist could find a suitable location.

Telephone conferencing equipment Except for the Project Circuit sites, there should not be a problem in the placement of the telephone conferencing equipment. Only when it is used in conjunction with the ITFS equipment, does it need to be in a particular location. The placement problems may be related to the locations of phone jacks. Some locations, like the elementary school office, are not always convenient. I remember during the early conference calls at one site people took their phone into a closet adjacent of the office.

Electronic Mail-Forum Locations of the computer used to access "Learning Link" vary. Many are in the school library and/or media center since the library-media specialist is handling the equipment in the project. At one site, it is in this location because the district administrator hopes this project can be a vehicle for updating their library system to on-line accessing of library data bases.

Districts agreed to supply the computer, disc drives and printer, as well as a direct access phone line. At one site, the equipment is all at the high school which is located between the two participating elementary schools. Everyone must travel 10 miles. At another site the other elementary school is 40 miles away. For next year I would like these sites to have their own SCA receiver, computer system and telephone conferencing equipment. At a third site the computer equipment is kept at the elementary building for fourth, fifth and sixth graders. The other building, which is for k-3 grades, is three miles away. We are not sure about placing duplicate equipment into this district.

Four districts installed a new direct access phone line in the library for project use with the computer modem and telephone conferencing equipment. The location is good for small group conversations and easy access. One district has created a distance education room where all their equipment is located.

Future Actions: Since the appropriate placement at some of the project sites of the equipment is a major concern, we need to reexamine the question next year. Since the second year will involve more of the elementary staff, more persons will be complaining about travel to the high school building. This may not seem like a big distance to travel to the project staff, but it certainly is a barrier to some participants use of the equipment.

1.3 Integrating of technology into the fabric of the school and the staff development project Jeri made the statement that the project should realize that "what the technology is capable of delivering, and in fact what it delivers, are two separate things." As an example, she referred to the quality of the content on the SCA tapes which may be high, but the reception problems make the programs difficult to hear.

Use of the technology continues to increase. For example, the telephone conferencing equipment will be used to conduct exit interviews with each district leadership team. This activity will replace second semester site visits. Electronic mail is replacing land mail daily. Two more half-day ITFS teleconferences are scheduled for April and May with the district leadership team. However we do realize that use and integration are not the same items.

Future Actions: Since Jeri raised the issue, I must admit that at this point I am not sure if the participants can separate the content from the delivery. We need to listen more carefully to statements made by participants or else ask them directly about whether or not they can comment on each aspect. Perhaps the replies can be helpful to the project staff in their work next year.

1.4 **Evidence of technological "readiness" across sites** One of the biggest errors the project staff made was assuming the library-media specialists were prepared to assume the roles and responsibilities related to the installation and use of the technology. For example, since the state educational television programming has been available since 1974, we expected people to know how to tape video programs and use them in an "educationally sound manner." Yet, several districts failed to tape record the broadcast inservice and student video programming. In some districts, teachers use the student video programs without proper before and after program activities. These teachers do not use activities required for meaningful learning from highly mediated instructional materials like video programs.

The library-media specialist did not know how to tape record a radio program nor check an antenna system. Worst of all, they failed to communicate their problems to the proper person. There were real communication gaps between the reading and media specialists at the programming level; and the library-media specialist and principal at the equipment needs level.

To date there has been wide use of electronic mail by a few persons. The project participants are the biggest users in the state of "Learning Link," which is a service available to the 431 public school districts as well as other parochial schools and professional media organizations. The "heavy users" were not more technologically ready than others in the sense of having background knowledge. However, the heavy users have lots of reading ideas to share and have accepted their responsibility to do so.

We expected that once trained, the library-media specialist would teach their other team members and target teachers, how to use the bulletin board. We don't think this has been done at many sites.

From the beginning of the project staff has noticed a difference in the telephone conferencing communication patterns among Project Circuit people who they have used the equipment for several years. For example, all persons on the line contribute, and many do so more than once.

Future Actions: In year two, the project staff has decided to attempt to help the library-media specialists learn their new roles and responsibilities related to installation of technology, meaningful learning from mediated, distance education materials, like video and audio tapes, and interactive communication patterns via electronic forums, teleconferencing and video teleconferencing. The Wisconsin certification for library media specialists already has described these roles and responsibilities. This certification can be used as another rationale for the inservice which the project will provide.

1.5 **Creative alternatives employed by sites** to obtain copies of video and radio programs, seemed interesting to Jeri and her case study evaluators. To the staff, this is not interesting. We volunteered to send copies of missed programs. Still some schools choose to get them from one another.

What is more interesting to the staff are the following examples. At one site, the elementary principal who also is the reading specialist, has been quite creative in using excerpts for the SCA radio programs in her staff development activities. At another site the seventh grade target teacher has used quite successfully with her students, excerpts from the "Teaching Reading Comprehension" tapes for teachers. In some districts each person is given a tape of the radio programs so they can listen in their car or at home.

In one districts the leadership team members have video taped themselves doing awareness level staff development activities for their entire elementary staff. They also have taped themselves modeling reading strategies to students. These tapes are available for other teachers who are not target teachers this year. In another district the reading specialist has taped herself modeling the strategies. She then offers these tapes to her target teachers who are reluctant to have her come into their classroom to model.

Each district is preparing a report of their activities and learning this year. These reports may be a source of information and examples of other creative uses of technology.

1.6 How are sites using technology? Once installed the Wausau area ITFS system is in use for community adult education. The telephone conferencing equipment is being used for a variety of other purposes. The SCA radio is being used to receive other student programming.

Only one district is sharing reading instruction materials and ideas for other teachers/reading specialists via the bulletin board. Teachers and students at two districts are using the electronic mail to send letters and writing assignments.

1.7 What has been learned about technology needs assessment for assessing a site's readiness for project implementation? We made lots of false assumptions about the capabilities of the library-media specialists. We did not want to "talk down" to them. So we did not ask the kinds of detailed questions which we could include when rewriting the technology needs assessment instrument. The project staff is not sure that a revised instrument would have gotten us honest answers.

Summary As Jeri said, we are vulnerable in the area of technology. It is visible and easy to attack. In retrospect, the staff realizes that the entire first semester of the project could have been spent in merely delivering and installing the technologies. Six months, however is not long enough in some cases. Despite the problems with technology, a lot of good things have gone on in reading program improvement and development of district leadership teams.
We would like to think that delats in purchase requests won't happen again, but because equipment is purchased through state agencies it may sometimes be unavoidable.

Jeri's report suggested that perhaps the wrong person has been given responsibilities related to the installation and use of the technologies. There may be another person in the district who is more skilled in using technology and more interested in learning new skills. Wisconsin certification of library media specialists assumes these skills. So there are inservice needs in the state.

We've learned that the district teams have different communication patterns. At the "best" site in terms of communication patterns, the team is lead by the elementary principal who schedules regular team meetings. Problems with installation and use of technology have been dealt with at these meetings. The team accepted the equipment delivery and installation problems by moving beyond them and dealing with the reading dimensions of the project. We are wondering if communication patterns among leadership team members is something we must address next year.

2. SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT PURPOSE

2.1 Perception of multiple and sometimes unclear project goals The project staff has continuously stated in letters and documents to participants as well as in the original project proposal and promotional materials, that there are two long-term and general project goals: (1) Improvement of reading programs and (2) Implementation of a research-based, distance education staff development project.

First-year activities (objectives) have been primarily related to reading. For example, a first year objective has been for the district to form a leadership team (elementary principal, reading specialist and library-media specialist) who spend paid-for, released time, learning what it means to teach reading as a constructive and strategic process. Each district received $1600.00. One route to this learning was to spend some of this released time working with two to six teachers (target teachers) and their students. Principals and reading specialists were encouraged to go into target teacher's classrooms and to model reading as thinking. Library media specialists were encouraged to model during reading times in the library or classrooms; and to use the new reading vocabulary when talking with students in the library. The entire team was encouraged to meet with target teachers in "study groups" where they could, for example, discuss journal articles on the teaching of reading as thinking; review the modeling in terms of criteria for "good modeling behavior;" view and discuss the inservice video programs for the "Teaching Reading Comprehension" series.

We also believe that a person's motivitions can affect their perceptions. For example, at the August meeting in Eau Claire we overheard two district administrators say to their collegues that the free equipment they would receive was the reason they joined the project. During the first semester visits to districts the project staff asked each member of the leadership team about their personal and/or district project goals, and how this view may have changed since the beginning of the project. Attached is a partial listing of replies.

The replies indicate that participants goals are different from those of the project staff, are more specific, and related to reading rather than distance education or staff development. For example, one principal said his goal was accomplished in the first month because it was "getting the reading specialists into the classroom. Another principal said his goal was to get teachers to use fewer workbooks, which consumed a large portion of his yearly supply budget. No one on the project staff had articulated these specific goals.

Future actions: Jeri has reminded us that the field of evaluation agrees that without clarity on the evaluation object, a project is confusing. So the staff would be wise to reestablish with participants some consensus on the projects two goals. During the second year these two long-term goals will remain constant, while activities or second year objectives will change. The project staff may want to examine second year objectives in terms of the proper balance between the two long-term goals.

In the second year we will be responsible for determining the answer to the question: "What is the evaluation object?" Should we look for improvements in reading programs? Should we look at whether or not distance education is effective in going beyond information delivery to modeling and coaching? Is the evaluation object the district leadership team, in terms of their communication patterns or their new roles and responsibilities related to reading, instructional leadership and distance education staff development?

2.2 **Questions regarding the preferred balance in implementing a multi-prong staff-development effort** At the August inservice meeting considerable time was spent clarifying the first year's objectives that put emphasis on the learning by the district leadership team--learning the new definition of reading and instructional approach, also learning new roles, and responsibilities in instructional leadership and distance education. This learning was to build background knowledge of all involved on the district leadership team. Districts were to provide in-depth staff development activities only for a few target teachers--but primarily within the context of the learning by the district leadership team.

Not all of these first-year objectives or goals have received the project staff's full attention during the first year, mainly because of the time spent with acquisition and installation of technologies. For example, little attention has been devoted directly to the instructional leadership roles and responsibilities of the principal. Even less explicit attention has been directed towards distance education learning except that we have been involved in doing it without reflection on what we are doing or its quality/benefits.

The sites have varied in the ways the district leadership teams have functioned, with respect to their self-learnings, their work with target teachers, and the efforts made in implementing any awareness level staff development activities among the rest of the K-8 staff. Two sites have enrolled their K-8 staff in the graduate television course offered from UW Eau Claire. Other sites have concentrated on self-learning by the team, including the library-media specialist. Most sites offered at least one half-day inservice activity for the entire elementary school staff.

Future Actions: Jeri suggested that the project staff might want to rank-order and prioritize staff development activities before the start of year two, including thinking about which ones might be eliminated. Another direction the project can consider is to interact with the districts regarding their district's staff development plans. In Wisconsin, Standard O requires districts to establish a professional staff development plan designed to meet the needs of individuals or curriculum areas in each school. The plans and models are up to the district, but we can help them understand how this project can influence their plans.

2.3 Differences in working assumptions about the respective roles of project and sites In a recently published project brochure, the roles and responsibilities of each member of the district leadership team are listed. A similar section was not written for the project. Our responsibilities are related to delivery and installation of the technologies, and use of these technologies to deliver, among other things, staff development activities to the district leadership team, including modeling and coaching, for example, on their instructional leadership in improving reading programs.

Perhaps some of the differences in assumptions about project and site roles is related to the sites feeling too much of the installation responsibility has shifted to them. For example, some sites did not want to put in a new phone jack or purchase an FM antenna. Maybe they expected the project to pay for everything though they were told at the beginning that the project would not.

Reading specialists and teachers report that they really like the two "units" sent them: "inference" and "storymapping." These units contain many kinds of resources, including summaries of reading journal articles. Originally the project did not expect to produce such units nor summarize journal articles. We expected that these activities could be done by the participants. In two districts the reading specialist wrote summaries of journal articles. They shared these summaries along with the articles, with their target teachers, prior to study-group discussions of the articles. Other districts just gave the articles to teachers.

Future Actions: In future communication with participants we need to address and clarify what is expected of everyone. Again, this lack of clarity may have been caused by the shift in project activities that occurred due to delays in installation and use of technologies. For example, we expected to produce ITFS teleconferences for library-media specialists in which there was modeling of their use of strategies during "storytimes." This program would have communicated an expectation which is unclear at this time.

2.4. Difference in rank-ordering of project-related objectives We have asked the reading specialist, particularly to engage in a variety of activities that can be viewed as objectives. We did not specify either the scope nor sequence of these activities, nor did we require them.

For example, in late November, several sites reported they did not have time for awareness level staff development work. In our concern for accomodating their pressures, we backed off in our work on this activity--let each location do what they could do. Perhaps this action on our part is what is causing the confusion.

2.5 Budding development of a local definition and ownership of "project" Hopefully project ownership is in full bloom in one or two sites by now. Reading the transcripts of the telephone conference calls provides an indication of the extent of ownership or lack of it.

The project staff believes that ownership comes after learning--but not immediately afterwards. First may come dependence, fear or rejection. Some reading specialists began with the idea that Ros's word was law, while others were irritated by Ros who was telling them what to do. Still other reading specialists took Ros's ideas, thought about them, and considered them as guidelines to be used within her own context.

Jeri raised the question "How can the project facilitate site tailoring/ownership of project and keep true to project intent? Maybe the second year will provide time needed to bring the two together as much as is advisable.

Summary This theme and the next one which is related to staff development, seem interrelated and contain issues which are extremely important to resolve. The project staff is responsible for evaluation next year. Jeri and her fellow evaluators will continue with the project. We must provide them directions as to the object to be evaluated and the evaluation design. We need to decide on the role of formative evaluation in year two and the decree of cooperation that will exist between evaluators and project staff.

3. ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Differing perceptions of the roles to be played in SD by project and site personnel Item 2.3 contains a reply to this issue. But I am sensitive to a related question raised by Jeri on February 15. She wondered if we had assessed readiness of sites for staff development; and if we are taking into account the schools existing staff development plans or point of view. Since funding did not occur until June, we could not expect districts to delay their 1987-88 staff development plans, which were prepared the previous spring.

We have provided each site with money to buy released time for learning by the leadership team. This provisions does imply some recognition that our model may be a mismatch with their present one. The sites surely are most familiar with the "one-session" model in which each staff development activity is on a different topic/area. We tried to describe the longitudinal and "learning to see anew ones daily work" qualities of the project's staff development model at the August meetings in Eau Claire. But so many of the people came to receive the equipment and learn about installing and using it that the staff development model ideas could have gotten lost or minimally heard.

We believe that the message that particularly got lost, is the one related to this first year being primarily a time for the district leadership team to build their background knowledge about the reading as thinking, and to use these new understandings to reconceptualize daily instructional activities. Most of the summary reports we are receiving from districts do focus not on this learning, but on the staff development activities the reading specialist held for the target teachers. A few summary reports do describe the learning as revolutionary--as seeing daily activities in a new light--a new kind of learning for many persons.

The staff development plan and model will vary at different sites. This will depend a great deal on the expertise of the local leadership team; and on how much additional resources the project makes available to and matches with the needs of local staff. The project never promised to provide local staff development activities.

The project in the second year will provide more examples of modeling and coaching--the interactive kinds of learning situations best demonstrated via the ITFS teleconferences and followed-up via computer forums. We will work next year to provide more guidance in this direction so that local staff development can incorporate more of the same elements.

3.2 __Constraints in delivering staff development as intended__ Two major constraints hampered the delivery of staff-development--first, only one member of the district leadership team received distance education, staff development learning activities this year--the reading specialist. Second, and related, the only distance education technologies available for the first three quarters of the project were those technologies best for delivery of information (direct instruction and modeling with minimal analysis of modeling). The staff has not evaluated our effectiveness in direct instruction, let alone our gaps in modeling and coaching.

We believe we will particularly need to deal with two dimensions of delivery next year--the modeling and coaching, and doing so for the new responsibilities of the three team members, not just the reading specialist.

3.3 **Lack of clarity about how much and what information sent by the project to the sites should be covered including questions about how much should be covered by each team member** We realize that a lot of information has been sent to the reading specialist, less to the other team members. Many end of year reports indicate that some participants benefited from the articles and information, which are another form of staff development.

We are not sure we knew how people would respond to, or "cover" what we sent out. "Covered" could mean read, translate into own words, discuss, reread, and so on, by oneself, with team members or with target teachers. We did not stipulate how to deal with the information. Should we?

The following example may help me answer this question. Recently we put on the electronic forum a two page document on the topic basal readers, which was written by the DPI state superintendent--Dr. Grover. This document supported an issue raised in August when we distributed a three page document on the weaknesses of basal readers. At that time we involved principals and reading specialists in a "demonstration distance learning activity" on weaknesses of basal readers. In March 1987, a district administrator had asked if the reading as thinking improvements would lead to the elimination of the basal. She did not join the project out of fear of this possibility.

We wanted participants to read statements from others and discuss the topic in order to build their background information and eliminate irrational fears. The new reading approach does suggest eliminating lots of basal reading activities. We knew at some point we would need to again discuss this topic with the principal and reading specialist, at least, and eventually with the library-media specialist who will be called on to identify new reading materials.

This example implies that we do expect people to read what is sent, digest it and be able to discuss the issues raised when an occassion arises. So what we hear in this issue is another matter--how much time per week can teachers and the team spend reading and understanding the information in articles and other documents. We can ask them before next year begins?

3.4 Questions about how different pacing needs within site team might be accomodated One reason we are working with a district leadership team is so they have the authority to determine the pacing of their own site-based activities. We have prescribed only a few activities, like viewing by the team and target teachers, a "Storylords" and "Teaching Reading Comprehension" tape on the topic "Inference." We did not say when, where, or how to conduct this activity, put rather focused on the purpose(s) of the activity.

Sites did ask for examples of how other participants were finding released time and working with target teachers. We responsed by collecting and distributing examples.

We did accomodate pacing needs early in the project in two areas. With the first thinking process introduced--using one's prior knowledge, we doubled the number of SCA radio programs and telephone conference calls on this topic at the request of project sites. We delayed till January, the introduction of the second thinking process, inferencing as was requested by many sites.

We also allowed great freedom in determining if K-8 awareness-level activities would even be held this year. Some sites are going to begin next year. This latter area gets back to Jeri's question--how do we accomodate site needs and not loose the intents of the project. I'm not sure if eliminating this activity in year one is a major obstacle in terms of accomplishing the intentions of the projects. If so staff development must receive major emphasis next year.

3.5 **Challenge of sharing "reading authority" and project ownership with project staff** This issue is one Doris Cook deals with everyday. Reading specialists are going to feel threatened if we get lots of trained, well-informed teachers and good reading instruction. She is working on this problem with leaders in the state reading association and in teacher education programs.

Some of the project staff had never considered the issue. The reading specialists in each district have been the reading authority. Now project staff not only step in as a new authority, but we say their old curriculum, which may be only one year old, is incorrect! If they had paid attention to state guidelines when writing curriculum, they would have been more on target. Now however, the district reading specialists must somehow "save face."

In one site this "saving face" is being accomplished by only permitting the new reading approach to be used in the content areas. However, in this district project ownership is high. In phase two we will place more attention on reading in the content area. By default these people will hear us say first the changes are made in reading, and then carried over to the content areas or vice-versa. We'll see if the intent of the project can be accomplished without reducing project ownership at this site.

Jeri suggested that we form an advisory team that involved reading specialists, in order to address this authority issue. So far we have not acted on her suggestion.

3.6 **Differences in both the valuing and understanding of the reading instruction principles and skills being delivered** Project staff is aware that differences exist in both valuing and understanding. We worked very hard on building background knowledge because of our worry is for valuing that omits understanding. We have deliberately stayed away from value questions or valuing opportunities with those participants whom I think lack understanding. The exit interviews and project summary reports from districts can provide some insights on understanding.

3.7 **Appreciation of DPI interest and involvement in school SD, as well as general appreciation for much of content being presented and its usefulness with kids** It's always nice to be appreciated.

Discussion Second year funding will permit the project staff to work on the staff development issues raised in Jeri's formative evaluation report. We are particularly interested in the findings in her summative evaluation report related to using distance education to implement staff development, as it relates to better reading instruction and for teachers understanding of the new definition of reading and its implications for reading across the curriculum.

How distance education can help achieve this is a project goal that we are seeking to demonstrate. Research tells us lots about the conditions of successful staff development. Our challenge is to translate them into distance education for the needs of each member of our district leadership teams, particularly as they work in the second year with their entire K-8 staff and in the content areas.

4. LOGISTICAL REALITIES AND PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS

The project staff believed that by providing each district with $1600 for released time of the reading specialist and library-media specialist, many constraining conditions could be removed. Obviously we were wrong, but this will always be a problem. We will keep on expecting schools to find a way/a time.

4.1 **The expectations of after-school meeting for teachers and in-school visits by reading specialists** We did not determine when the team would meet with target teachers. We did schedule SCA radio programs and conference calls for after school from 3:30-4:15. But both activities were meant for the reading specialist, not teachers. We thought this 3:30 time was best for audio taping by the media specialist. Each program was repeated the next day at 1:00 pm. We did not anticipate that sites would use the programs live where the reading specialist and target teachers listened. For the conference calls, six districts participate per call. We thought after-school hours were best. In the LaCrosse area this is the time the CTN conference lines are available.

The April and May ITFS teleconferences were rescheduled for during the school day as a response to sites requests. One project site objects to anything during the school day. Another project site has not settled a teachers contract this year and has participated in nothing during the day and only some teleconference calls after school.

Many reading specialists are teachers, which is a constraint we did not anticipate. We expected reading specialists to at least have half of the day available for their specialist's work. Since they are teachers, they prefer after-school meetings because they find too much additional work in preparing for a substitute teacher.

At the start of the project next year this problem will need to be addressed. We have not decided to eliminate sites who are not providing at released time for reading specialists. We could use advise on whether or not we should do so.

4.2 Problems of communicating across sites to exchange information/materials Telephone conference sessions were meant to facilitate such exchanges. Maybe too much time was spend on other topics, like discussing a journal article. The electronic mail and forum also is for sharing; and so far only one reading specialist who is a second grade teacher has shared. I have asked others to follow her example, but no replies. One reading specialist has shared via land mail and we have used the electronic forum to distribute her instructional materials. The few exchanges have been good. More will use the electronic mail next year, especially if library media specialists encourage and facilitate this.

4.3 Apparant distance of project staff Jeri reports that people want to be visited monthly. Our response is that the sites fail to recognize this as a distance learning project. They are looking for visits we never promised. Monthly site visits would violate the integrity of the project.

Most visits should be done electronically. Since that wasn't possible the first year, we are fortunate that funds were available for site visits. This helped reduce the negative feelings about the project. We will continue with contacts and visits where possible. For instance, when we are in the area or when we are attending a meeting, inservice, or other activity.

This year, each site was visited once in the first semester for project purposes by Ros, Doris or Marge. Elaine has met on other meeting occassions with district administrators when they could have chosen to discuss the project with her.

Judy Aakre has visited each site at least once during the second semester. Some sites have seen Judy two or three times, as she tries to get their equipment properly installed. Regional ITFS representatives and even the Wausau area radio engineer have visited sites. Three sites were selected to pilot test the new third grade reading test so they were visited by persons from the DPI's test and measurement bureau.

Jeri suggested that we might want to assess this issue at the end of the second year. If it still exists then we may need to be more concerned, and address what kinds of activities can be added to year three to eliminate this perception.

4.4 **The challenge of getting the team together** The collective functioning of a team is exemplary at one site. Other sites present negative examples. We need to collect more information on ways teams have managed to get together and if they have any new ideas for next year. We could disseminate some effective ways via technology. We fear that in a couple of sites the team will never get together. We would appreciate advice on activities we could introduce in year two.

4.5 **Frustration when logistical constraints are not attended to** We shared examples of how reading specialists were getting released time, but frustrations still existed, in one site, for example, where the reading specialist is a third and forth grade teacher who does not want released time, but has no time for after-school work either. Originally we considered asking this district to leave. They seemed willing to put up with the frustrations, saying they expect to find solutions before year two.

Reading specialists need time to be effective in this project. We are trying to get schools to really look at how they spend their time and how best to do it.

4.6 Conservative optimism that technology might resolve some constraints We expect that technology will not resolve constraints like 4.1 and 4.4. Only duplication of efforts, offering things at multiple times, will permit more accomodation to individual schedules. We don't think the staff is big enough do provide multiple duplications.

Frustrations over lack of sharing could be resolved but participants need to be willing to share on the electronic forum, for example.

4.7 Appreciation of new equipment, materials, and organizations that are residue of project. Ditto, 3.7.

5. COMMUNICATION

5.1 Reactions to the amount of written communication provided regularly by the project Everyone agrees that the amount of information is overwhelming. Ros thinks people need to learn how to put information into a bigger framework. Jeri thinks less may be more. For example, why am we sending them transcripts of the WISLINE telephone conference calls?

5.2 Reactions to the tone of some communications I got frustrated with the media specialists and their lack of attention to their FM antenna situation. I did write a letter saying I would no longer send tapes of SCA programs, so they better "shape up." One person did not appreciate the message in this letter since his SCA radio reception was bad. He is the one with the detached antenna on the roof!

5.3 Determining how to use, share and rank-order information Ros wondered if she needed to help the reading specialists see how the information fits this bigger framework she suggested--understanding reading as a constructive and strategic process. We can consider starting out next year with a review of how the information fits into this framework.

Also next fall we can do more modeling of use of the reading strategies while reading professional journal articles and other documents. We tried to do this on one SCA radio program and teleconference call. But more work is in order.

5.4 Appreciation of personalized feedback Now that the bulletin board is up and running we respond daily to many electronic mail messages from reading specialists and library-media specialists. So this personalization of feedback will continue and increase. But coaching needs to be implemented so we need to wait and see how people respond to this kind of personalized feedback.

5.5 Perceived benefit of more two-way and twelve-way communications Jeri has advised that the flow of information needs to change. I have examined the transcripts for teleconferences and we do have a flow that centers around Ros, or me. Perhaps as background knowledge builds the flow will change and local experts can be the center. Learning new communication patterns can be the topic of staff development activities next year.

Discussion Jeri asks what we have learned about how information should be organized and delivered? She tells me that this project is treating the participants like learners not professionals. In year two we need to change our approach to let participants have responsibility for organization and delivery of information.

6. LEADERSHIP TEAM STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS

6.1 Expected and real motivations for team members We believe that we are introducing a new idea with the district leadership teams, and I don't expect common or matched motivations. We asked for a group of persons able or willing to accept certain responsibilities and new roles. We'd appreciate help in examining the impact of various motives in responsing to this request. Maybe Tom Faase, the case study evaluator at Athens can help here. I believe this topic is one of his areas of expertise.

We do know that the three principals who are also their districts K-12 reading specialist responded to the project with different interests. One said that at the time of hiring the school board and staff were worried that too much attention would be given by her to reading and other domains or areas of school work would suffer. This project provided a legitimation of her concern for improving the reading programs.

6.2 Actual and intended meeting patterns The project staff did not suggest any meeting patterns for district leadership teams. One team meet to decide placement of the ITFS equipment. From the district administrator's office they placed a teleconference call with me to discuss placement questions. We are unaware how different teams have established meeting patterns; and we need to pursue this information.

6.3 Emergence of team "spark plug" Jeri believes that unexpected persons have emerged as the team spark plug; and one is required to get and keep the project going. In Edgar it has been Bob Christianson, the elementary principal. Edgar was the last to join the project. Doris encouraged Bob to stay in even though in July he still hadn't hired a reading specialist. Lack of a spark plug may be what is hampering success of the project at two sites. I believe Edgar thinks cooperation among their team is more essential to success, than a "spask plug."

6.4 Role of specific team members and shared understanding of those roles

Jeri believes that self-definition of roles has a lot to do with the climate or ambience of the school. But the project staff also knows it has a lot to do with the capabilities of the team members, like the media specialist, for example. These people have not accepted or assumed their roles in the installation of the technologies, like the FM radio antennas and taping equipment. How can we find out if the source of these media specialists difficulties can be traced to school climate?

At the August meeting one district administrator disagreed violently with the role of the principal as instructional leader. Throughout the year we have found many principals who see themselves as facilitators, not leaders. This new role may need lots of attention for next year since it is center to many Wisconsin efforts in school improvement and highly supported by the DPI.

6.5 **Benefits and limitations accruing from school climate, teacher attitudes and district morale** We expect the case studies to provide information on this issue. We do know that in one district teacher contracts have not been signed this year. We'd like to get from that district honest information on how this situation has limited the project.

Many sites have said that they appreciated Doris's coaching on the qualities to look for in target teachers. Selecting risk takers, for example, turned out to be a valuable clue.

6.6 The existence of a coherent project from the perspective of the team

Jeri suggested that we might ask the team whether or not they have found the project exciting and what their next steps might be. We don't think a coherent project perspective exists in many sites but we are not sure how to assess this matter. We hate to ask questions about "excuting" because they require valuing responses.

Discussion Gains from the leadership team approach relate back to the two long-term project goals. Principals need to understand and provide instructional leadership for both a new reading program and a distance education approach to staff development. Library-media specialists need to provide leadership to facilitate both goals. Improving the K-12 reading program is a longitudinal goal, and the reading specialist needs the other team members to provided the additional kinds of leadership required to accomplish the goal. We are interested to read in the summative evaluation report about the gains from this team approach.

7. SITE-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS, DIFFERENCES

7.1 Degree to which project accommodated local diversity in motivation

Responses given above provide at least four examples of such accommodations. But the project goals may be thwarted in these accommodations.

7.2 Team composition/ability Jeri thinks the library-media specialist may not be the best ones to deal with the technologies. We disagree and expect to provide inservice for then next year.

7.3 **Style of Implementation** This project has a particular style, according to Jeri. The project needs to examine ways to blend these styles with ones that exist at the project sites.

One element in the project style is analogous to the instructional model we are presenting project participants--the gradual release of responsibility model. We are building background knowledge but expect participants to move to independence in learning and using what is learned. We realize that in the first year it is a challenge to learn and then turn around and teach others. We will directly address this model with participants next year.

7.4 Recognition and optimization of positive site characteristics

In our first visits we asked sites for their perspective on positive site characteristics. We can ask again at the end of the project. We can begin next year with participants self-reported positive and negative site characteristics, in an anonymous manner.

7.5 Recognition and accommodation of local site liabilities or constraints

Already cited has been the situation in one district where the reading specialist had never gone into a classroom to work with teachers. This district has not been pushed to get very far beyond this constraint. The reading specialist is still not welcome in the classroom of the target teachers (as of Februrary). She tapes herself teaching Chapter 1 and discusses her modeling with the target teachers. I am interested in our exit interviews to identify liabilities or constraints that existed in the beginning that now are gone, as well as which ones still exist.

Discussion We do expect 100 percent personalization of the project. We believe that we are facilitating such personalization by our lack of requirements, for example, not telling people where to locate equipment and not specifying how districts should spend their released-time money.

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Attachments: Goal Statement from Project Leadership Teams

Evaluators working with Jeri Nowakowski